



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

OUR LADY AND ST BENEDICT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL **Part of The Newman Catholic Collegiate (MAC)**

Abbey Lane, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 8AU

Inspection date 14th - 15th June 2016
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

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	204
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of School Committee	Mrs Diane Jones
Telephone number	01782 234646
E-mail address	office@olsbprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2013
DFE School Number	861/3405
Unique Reference Number	140141

Headteacher Mrs Debbie Sims

Previous inspection: 3

This inspection: 2

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY

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 3 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Each of these lessons was conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- 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 the chair and other members of the academy committee, the principal, the subject leader and parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, a class reflection 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

- This is a smaller than average primary school and serves the parish of Our Lady and St Benedict Stoke-on-Trent. It draws many pupils from the housing estate of Abbey Hulton.
- The proportion from ethnic minorities is average.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 27%.
- Twenty-six pupils have English as a second language.
- The school is in an area of profound multiple deprivations; it is in the bottom 4% of wards in the country. Socio-economic analysis of ACORN data places the academy in a Category 5, an area of significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for FSM is double the national average.
- No pupils have educational special needs statements. Children on the special needs register number 56
- Attainment on entry to nursery is well below average and this is reflected across all areas of learning.
- Since the last inspection the school has become a member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life of this school is strong. Provision is very good and the way in which pupils participate and respond is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes and relationships contribute significantly to a vibrant Catholic life.
- The provision of liturgy, prayer and worship is good in its variety and quality. Pupils' response to the worship, which they help to plan, prepare and provide, is outstanding. They fully participate reflectively with great respect and reverence. They sing with great joy and exuberance.

- Progress and attainment in RE is very good. Pupils make very good progress because the subject is well taught, the curriculum is carefully planned, and marking and assessment are thorough. Lessons contain a wide range of activities and difficult ideas are taught in interesting and at times inspiring ways.
- The principal, senior leaders and governors are fully committed to the development of RE and the Catholic and worship life of the school. They rigorously monitor and evaluate these aspects of the school and the analysis is fed into concise effective plans which are regularly reviewed.
- The RE leader is outstanding and the school has profited greatly from the support it has gained from becoming part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- Pupils greatly appreciate, value and participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school. Throughout each phase pupils show a developing knowledge of the Catholic Faith and are able to translate it into the way they live their lives, the way they treat each other and all members of the school and wider community.
- Pupils recognise that they are called to serve others and God and as the move through the school they have a growing awareness of Christian service and vocation.
- Pupils' capacity for praise, giving thanks, forgiveness and readiness to celebrate life is outstanding. They are able to speak eloquently about these matters. Children are confident enough to question and debate their faith to enable them to grow in understanding.
- Children have embraced work on the virtues of the Catholic Faith responding reflectively and considering what they mean to them in their own lives, identifying ways in which they can put them into practice.
- They demonstrate strong values and knowledge of what is right and wrong and are keen to act to put things right. In light of recent terrorist attacks, the pupils have responded with debate around 'Terrorism has no Religion.' They have written to the local MP to find out what can be done to support the refugee crisis and discussed this with him in person when he visited the school. They bear witness to their faith every day and this is shown directly through their actions.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes and relationships in contribute greatly to strong community cohesion.
- The principal and vice principal, who is also RE leader, hold prime responsibility for leading the Catholic life of the school and the promotion of Catholic ethos for pupils, parents and staff is their highest priority.
- A wide range of processes are used to monitor Catholic life: including audits, regular learning walks, pupil conversations, drop-ins, evaluation of liturgies, class assemblies and reflections. Records are kept of the Catholic environment of the school and its grounds; a photographic trail with scripture quotes can be found in the Catholic life folder.
- There is an excellent understanding of what is involved in being a Catholic school amongst staff, pupils, local committee members and some parents: they

acknowledge and promote the mission of the Church in education, centrality of the Eucharist, Catholic values, significance of the Gospels in lives of pupils and staff, inclusivity and equality of all before God.

- The provision for staff induction and in-service training to develop staff in relationship of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The impact of this work can be seen in the way non-Catholic, NQT and new members of staff participate fully and embrace all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.
- The provision for sex and relationship education is in line with Catholic teaching but is in need of review and development
- Short focus mini topics linked to current affairs and events and the way they relate to the Faith offer children the opportunity to apply and discuss their values with members of staff. Any misunderstandings are debated and addressed, with concerns being passed on to senior leaders.

Collective Worship

- The way pupils show interest and actively participate in collective worship is excellent as is the extent to which pupils are acquiring skills in planning and leading prayer and worship;
- Collective worship contributes hugely to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and to their knowledge and understanding of scripture and the Faith
 - Pupils' knowledge of traditional prayer and liturgy is very good as is their knowledge of a variety of prayer styles. Children are able to express their feelings and thoughts through their own prayer during class reflections and in wider school assemblies.
- Pupils' have an understanding and appreciation of celebration and prayer from different faiths and traditions.
- Worship materials are prepared by pupils. During the inspection a Year 5 pupil wrote, prepared and led an assembly with the class about St Anthony of Padua entirely independently.
- During all prayer and acts of worship the pupils are devout, reflective respectful and reverent. They sing with joy and exuberance
- Acts of worship fully reflect the Catholic character of the school and take into account the variety of faith and non-faith backgrounds among pupils. All pupils fully participate and choose to make the sign of the cross
- Daily prayers take place in all classes. Traditional prayers are shared together across the liturgical year as part of class and whole school worship. Gospel assemblies, liturgies, celebration and class assemblies are well embedded into the Catholic life of the academy and children are enthusiastic and proud to plan and take part.
- Because they are planned on a rota for the academic year all children get the opportunity to take part.
- A focus of development across the school is linking the Gospel word to pupils' own lives and this feeds into assemblies, especially the Monday Gospel assembly.
- Experienced members of the team support new staff to develop collective worship opportunities both across the school and in their class base.

- All prayer areas and displays are of the highest quality and pupils are very insistent upon the importance of caring for and respecting these areas.

Leadership

- Since the last inspection the school has become a member of the Newman Catholic Collegiate and it is acknowledged by the principal, senior leaders and the governors that the school has gone through a period of rapid improvement and growth.
- Leaders promote the Catholic life of the school in the local community and within the school very effectively. Senior leaders and governors share a strong commitment to the Catholicity of the school. They are assisted in this by the support they receive from other multi-academy member schools.
- There are accurate, consistent and robust systems for monitoring, analysing and evaluating of the impact of Catholic life on pupils and staff. Evidence of monitoring and evaluating is well organised but the school should transfer monitoring documents to the web based system used for other aspects of school life.
- The school always prepares an RE development plan. It encompasses the Catholic life and mission of the school and forms part of the core subject plan which sits around the teaching and learning development plan. All areas are reviewed termly to coincide with data collection and monitoring evaluations.
- The plan follows the MAC improvement plan structure which sets out aims, actions, success criteria and short term targets which are reviewed regularly and inform the next stage of development.
- The provision for staff induction and in-service training to develop staff and governors' understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education is excellent. Staff understand that the key purpose of the school is to teach and promote the Catholic Faith by example and sharing their own faith experience.
- Governors are very aware of their responsibilities for both Catholic life and religious education and play a full part in shaping the direction of Our Lady and St Benedict as a Catholic school. They know the school well and are prepared to challenge where necessary. They are assisted in their governance by the directors of the Newman MAC on whose skills and knowledge they are able to draw when necessary.
- Monitoring of collective worship is excellent in that it derives from shared expectations of what constitutes good practice, expectations which are fulfilled by all staff and pupils in assemblies and class prayers, reflection and liturgies.
- The principal and vice principal drop into class reflections and prayer regularly. Reflective behaviour and responses in Mass, liturgies, assemblies, Stations of the Cross and the rosary are observed by the principal and vice principal and fed back during staff briefing.
- There are clear rotas and topics for assemblies, liturgies and Masses linked to the liturgical year and the vice principal reviews key stage assembly and liturgy plans and provides feedback and support where necessary.
- The school is able to work closely with the current parish priest who makes positive and helpful suggestions to improve the worship life of the school.

- Senior leaders have put measures in place to ensure that pupils grow in their knowledge of how prayer and liturgy can play an important role in their lives. They listen to pupils and gather information that will enhance the provision of all aspects of prayer and worship
- Good support and in-service training in relation to worship is provided for NQTs, non-Catholic and new members of staff. This is very effectively provided by the vice principal. Staff express their complete confidence in the help and support they receive

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- Data analysis is completed by the principal and RE leader and then shared with individual members of staff. However this year following the introduction of the summary of attainment from the diocese the data input and analysis has been completed within staff meetings to allow staff to identify and target areas for development. The school feels this has provided a better context and more ownership of teaching and learning outcomes.
- Shared moderation of pupils' work supports the levelling of RE and ensures consistency of judgements across the school.
- The principal and vice principal carry out regular drop-ins and book trawls to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in RE. An annual RE observation takes place, which supports performance management. However, regular drop-ins and 'walk throughs' take place to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching of RE and to identify pupils' attitudes and outcomes. The school is moving towards a web-based monitoring system and it is intended that all RE documents will move over to this system.
- The vice principal discusses RE lessons and work with the pupils to monitor attitudes and progress of RE whilst informal conversations are held during drop-ins. Through pupil interviews leadership has found children to be very honest about their feelings and that they are confident to say when they are not enjoying the subject. Children new to school have expressed dislike or unease with RE, but these feelings reduce as they learn and understand more. These findings have been used to inform planning
- The vice principal discusses RE attainment and curriculum with the RE link committee member and responds to questions and challenges.
- The current leader of RE is outstanding; competent, knowledgeable, an exemplary teacher, energetic, hardworking and determined pupils will enjoy their learning.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Data analysis shows that children enter nursery with a low baseline and little knowledge or understanding of RE but by the time children leave Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils have made good progress within RE and leave at the expected level of attainment. Lower Key Stage 2 is currently achieving below expectations

due to historic issues and inexperienced teaching. This is being addressed by the school.

- Pupils enjoy RE and talk confidently about what they have been learning in class. They concentrate and are keen to do well and achieve highly. Older children enjoy questioning and debating to explore and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils have a very good religious vocabulary and talk knowledgeably about scripture, the teaching of the Church and liturgical life of the Church. They can also talk about the importance of way this knowledge impacts on their lives and behaviour.
- Pupils are particularly able to make links between events in the news and the way we are called to respond. For example they are able to talk about the meaning of parables and the teachings of Jesus and apply it the present day.
- Teaching of RE is good and at times outstanding. Much work has been done to ensure NQTs, non-Catholic and new teachers have access to good subject knowledge, excellent resources and good support and advice. Support provided by other adults is effectively deployed.
- ICT is used effectively by both teachers and pupils. Teachers use a range of styles and activities to engage pupils and develop their understanding. Difficult ideas are taught in an inspiring way and lessons provide good opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development
- Assessment is thorough and data carefully collected and analysed. Teachers use the 'must, should and could' assessment points and deepen pupils' learning through their questioning and marking in books. The quantity and quality of work in pupils books is very good and the marking very effective. The 'learning conversations' in a number of pupils books are very impressive.
- Moderation is securing accuracy of assessment across the school. Monitoring and data analysis shows that where teaching has been stable progression between key stages and classes is good.
- The parish priest is involved in RE lessons and provides valuable question and answer sessions.

The effectiveness of the curriculum in RE in promoting pupils' learning

- The curriculum is differentiated using the diocesan scheme the suggested activities as well as the statements. Adult support is used to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils.
- The Sacraments are taught well and Catholic pupils are prepared thoroughly for Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- The academy's long term curriculum map includes global dimension topics for each year group. These are designed to make links to Catholicism and other faiths and provide opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development.
- The liturgical and worship life of the school does much to enrich the curriculum and enhance the pupils, knowledge. Each class has a class saint which they research, have a good knowledge of and share with other classes in assembly.

- The school has a sex and relationship programme but it has been some time since it was reviewed and is in need of updating.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development is excellent. The school's aims explicitly state that the school sees its work as rooted in the teaching of Christ within the Catholic tradition. The family atmosphere of the school is valued by pupils who both experience it and contribute to it.
- The school is situated in an area of considerable deprivation and it has children who live in challenging circumstances, but the school provides an environment in which pupils thrive and grow spiritually, morally and do have a real sense of vocation. One pupil said 'this is a great school teachers want us to be the best we can be.'
- The school is located in a broadly white, working class community with some strong 'traditional' British values and a wide range of misconceptions regarding other faiths. The academy tackles these misconceptions head on when they arise, through careful and sympathetic planning of 'mini topics'. Recent work on 'Terrorism has no Religion' prompted by children, has guided them to think more deeply about terrorist attacks and look beyond the traditional representation and initial media coverage. Children show a great appreciation and respect for the Catholic values of love, forgiveness, tolerance, kindness, right and wrong and a knowledge of the virtues. At the same time they are developing a respect and acceptance of people of different backgrounds and faiths.

Recommendations

The school should:

- transfer all RE monitoring and assessment documents on to the school's web based system to increase efficiency and effectiveness and bring RE in line with other subject areas.
- work alongside the other schools in Newman Catholic Collegiate to ensure analysis of RE assessment information leads to consistency within the school and across the MAC
- develop a sex and relationship policy and programme in conjunction with partner schools in Newman Catholic Collegiate to ensure appropriate coverage and content.