



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WORCESTER

Inspection dates 3rd – 4th March 2014
Reporting Inspector Mr Joseph Skivington

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Fr Paul Whieldon
School address	St John's Bransford Road Worcester WR2 4EN
Telephone number	01905 421409
E-mail address	admin@ourlady.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2009
DFE School number	885/3397
Unique Reference Number	116921

Headteacher Mrs Gwen Fennell

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 5 RE lessons. 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 met with the governors. He observed a whole school assembly, 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 development plan and teachers' planning.

Information about the school

Our Lady Queen of Peace is a small Catholic primary school situated in Worcester, and serving the parish of the same name. The parish church is close by. There are 207 pupils on roll, of whom 74% are Catholic. Pupils are mainly White British, but there are growing numbers of children with English as an additional language (25%). The percentage of pupils with special needs at school action plus is slightly above average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2012.

Main Finding

Our Lady, Queen of Peace is an outstanding Catholic school. This judgement, based on the evidence gathered during the inspection, accords with the school's own self evaluation. It is a vibrantly Catholic and inclusive school, with an openness to all, recognising the image of God in every single individual, regardless of background or belief. All pupils benefit enormously from, and contribute to, every area of school life and consequently to its strong Catholic ethos. Their response to the excellent provision for collective worship is outstanding. The provision and outcomes from the religious education programme, both teaching and learning, are likewise outstanding. The support and challenge from the governors, including the link governor for RE, is proactive and highly effective. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior leadership team are outstanding. They know the school well and have clear, measurable goals and objectives, which have their origin in detailed, robust and effective procedures for monitoring provision and outcomes. These procedures have proved to be reliable.

School self evaluation

The school uses effective self evaluation procedures through frequent reviews and reflection on its current practice, which result in achievable aims and measurable objectives incorporated into the school development plan. These are then systematically acted upon and improvements noted so that effectiveness and impact are constantly reviewed. This is coupled with processes for getting feedback from pupils and parents through questionnaires and Pupil Voice. A culture is promoted in which people can ask questions and challenge through constructive criticism, for instance, in the planning and the development of the Catholic ethos through whole school reflection on its Catholic mission, the encouragement of staff prayer, and the reshaping of the practice and provision for collective worship. The governors make detailed notes on the effectiveness of assemblies and Masses which they attend whenever possible so that improvements can be put in place for the next time. The governing body is very much hands-on, challenging, but closely supporting, every aspect of the school's life. Each year group has a governor who adopts them and gets to know their school experience in more detail. Reports and reviews are read conscientiously and feedback to the school is immediate, as in the case of, for

instance, the headteacher's report on Catholic ethos. All statutory requirements are met fully.

The teaching and learning of RE is monitored regularly through subject review, lesson observations, and book trawls. These are programmed and carried out with growing impact on improved performance and outcomes throughout the school. The emphasis on learning from religion is a real strength because pupils are developing a sound grasp of what it means when translated into their daily lives. This is quite evident in their excellent behaviour and caring attitude towards each other. The curriculum is balanced and accessible to all pupils. It effectively provides pupils with a growing insight into the life and message of Jesus as well as the central beliefs that Catholics hold, and the link between belief and action. Pupils are given many opportunities to exercise their generosity and they do organise much charity work in the local community and beyond. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other major religions is sound.

The subject leadership of RE brings a clear vision and a knowledgeable approach to the subject. A clear programme of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, together with lesson observation and close scrutiny of written work is established, and these are having a positive impact on progress. Planning is revised constantly and data on pupils' progress is detailed and critically analysed. The teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in using this data to inform teaching and the setting of lesson learning objectives to meet the discovered needs of each pupil. What was an area for improvement at the last inspection is now a strength. There is a closely written formal review and summary of the impact of provision presented to the governors every year. Action points are drawn up by the subject leader after every analysis, patterns are very quickly identified, and effective focus is put where it is needed. This has led to increasing staff awareness and whole school objectives, such as the very fruitful emphasis on the importance of teaching for meaning, and learning from religion, which the school has grown into a strength.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils in RE are outstanding, the result of consistently good and better teaching over time. Pupils' base assessment scores in RE indicate prior knowledge and religious experience to be limited. Pupils make rapid progress in the Foundation classes and by the end of Key Stage 1 most are meeting or exceeding expected attainment levels. This excellent progress continues in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 almost all have met or exceeded their targets. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress, because of more targeted support such as well chosen differentiated and scaffolded tasks. Older pupils are able to speak with confidence about their learning in RE and have a sound grasp of the main tenets of the Faith and the significance and efficacy of prayer. They enjoy lessons where they are engaged in their own learning. There is evidence that the encouragement of independent, peer and group learning is developing more enthusiastic and motivated learners. They say they enjoy RE lessons and appreciate that they have the opportunity to feedback to their teachers on how best they learn in lessons. Their exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school contributes much to their learning.

The pupils through their time at Our Lady's absorb and internalise the attitudes and values inspired by the message of Jesus. They well understand the connection between these and how they should act towards others and behave in their own lives. They are quick to praise, to thank and to forgive. Every pupil regardless of faith, or none, feels a valued member of the school community, and participates reverently in prayer and liturgy. All pupils are

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.

familiar with the mission statement and have many opportunities to explore further their role in it, for instance, through the developing prayer leadership group. They make a positive contribution to the Catholic life of the school through pupil voice and the school council. Pupil questionnaires, for example, become the touchstone for the success or otherwise of the provision the children are receiving, alerting leadership of the need to change or reshape its approach. The liturgy group also allows further input from pupils, giving them more ownership and responsibility for their prayer life. Older pupils mentor and mediate each other and the younger pupils. They willingly take up the many opportunities to exercise their generosity by reaching out to others through a wide range of charitable events.

Pupils' response to prayer invitations and the rich provision is wholehearted, with an enthusiastic participation in liturgies and assemblies and opportunities for prayer. They are involved in the planning and presenting their own class assemblies, as well as being willing servers, readers and singers at the Masses in the parish church. There is room to develop even further their skills of planning and presenting their own liturgies with full ownership and becoming real leaders in the school, as they get older. Prayer is undoubtedly an important part of their daily lives. They pray well, even the youngest and their own prayers reflect their growing maturity and understanding. They sing with enthusiasm and feeling in whole school assemblies. The use of prayer bags widens their experience of prayer with family and beyond. Their response demonstrates their deepening spirituality and the school's vibrant life of prayer and worship.

The quality of teaching is consistently good and better and results in outstanding learning and progress over time. The best teaching involves the pupils fully in their own learning and encourages independent and peer work. They do the work, the teacher skilfully steers and shapes their learning through questioning that probes for understanding. Teachers are aware that their subject knowledge needs to be constantly deepened through supportive training and Inset in order to allow pupils, especially the more able, to achieve their full potential. Teaching assistants working with individual pupils provide fruitful feedback to the teacher so that individual learning needs can be better met. Teachers are well aware that lesson planning is more effective when it takes account of prior learning particularly in the case of setting lesson objectives, which target the learning needs and abilities of individual pupils. Where a lesson or written task is less effective the teacher has planned one task for all which has the effect of both defeating the less able, and not challenging the more able to make real intellectual effort. The best questioning reflects challenge and higher expectations, as well as probing and checking continually for understanding. The quality and helpfulness of the marking of written work is effective but the school acknowledges the need for pupils to understand in more detail how to improve. The marking policy is now being consistently followed, with some variation in the quality of the teacher's comment and the pupil's response, but much outstanding practice is being effectively shared.

Assessment procedures are successfully embedded and provide for the close tracking of individual progress, with teachers becoming increasingly confident in assessing using the level indicators, thanks to assessment Insets and moderation meetings. This in the best practice is leading to the smarter use of pupil data to inform lesson objectives and teaching strategies, and its impact over time in these classes really does show.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, closely linked to the Diocesan Strategy, and accessible to all. The relationships programme, *In the Beginning*, is in line with Catholic guidelines and well presented and received by pupils and parents. Since the last inspection the school has enriched the study of other faiths through more emphasis on the multi faith elements in the curriculum, but also with the very successful Multi Faith Week. It continues to build on its

links with other faiths, and cultures around the world, and as a result, pupils can speak with more understanding of similarities and differences between religions. School and parish work closely together to run the well planned and fruitful sacramental preparation programmes which provide an evident impetus within the RE curriculum.

The quality of the provision for collective worship is outstanding. The well constructed liturgies follow the Church's liturgical year, and are echoed by some excellent displays in classrooms and around the school, and traditional Catholic practices such as the Rosary in October, Stations of the Cross, Benediction, and opportunities for meditation express vividly the Catholicity of the whole school community. The curriculum makes an invaluable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Mass is celebrated regularly with pupils taking an active role. The prayer garden and prayer bags are an additional support to the children's developing spirituality. IT is used effectively both in lessons and assemblies to colour and flesh out the topics and themes. Links with the parish and involvement in parish life are a real strength, emphasising the school's place in the mission of the parish, and the latter's role within the wider Church.

Recommendations

Provide further opportunities for all pupils to take complete ownership in planning and presenting their own liturgies and assemblies.