



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company
Oxford Road, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2LF

Inspection dates:

2nd & 3rd May 2018

Lead Inspector:

Mr T J Hughes

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- The mission statement is central to every action, aspiration and purpose of each person in the school community.
- Pupils are eager and sincere in learning about faith and the impact it has on their lives.
- All pupils plan and deliver Collective Worship in a sacred and personal manner, inspired by their desire to be closer to God and to one another.
- The school's ethos has deepened significantly as a result of the passionate leadership of the principal and the trust invested in her by the school community.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- A proportion of teaching and learning in Religious Education does not enable good enough progress.
- Some pupils are not gaining knowledge or developing their spiritual thinking as well as others.
- Pupils' work in Religious Education is not always of an equal standard to that seen in English.
- Marking of pupils' Religious Education work does not deal robustly with liturgical errors.
- Leaders do not identify clearly the reasons for different groups of pupils achieving less well than others.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the teaching and learning of Religious Education to enable all pupils to make consistently good progress and achieve the high standards seen in English.
- Ensure accuracy with liturgical vocabulary.
- Evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of groups of pupils to inform the planning of their tasks in Religious Education.
- Update the school's website to better reflect its Catholic Life and provide information about current liturgical events.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.**The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.**

- The review and re-launch of the mission statement -
 'You are young, you are precious, you are loved'
 has powerfully united the school as a Christian community.
- Every pupil at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School knows that they are loved, valued and made in the image of God.
- Relationships at all levels are sincere, mutually respectful and provide the platform for success in the pupils' work and play.
- Pupils have become increasingly thoughtful about how their faith impacts on their lives.
- Pupils have an acute sense of how they should use their gifts and opportunities for the benefit of others. When discussing their vocations almost all pupils spoke of providing help for less advantaged members of society or caring for those who are unwell, disabled or marginalized.
- The school is built in the grounds of the Salesian Sisters and the pupils are proud of the heritage that this community imparts. The pupils are inspired by the spiritual influence of the Sisters and are happy to engage in many acts of prayer and faith supported by the order. The school has established 'The Salesian of the Week' where an individual child from each class is celebrated and rewarded for their behaviour and demonstration of Catholic values and virtues.
- The spiritual retreats for pupils at the end of each phase are held in the Salesian Convent accommodation with support from the Sisters. These retreats are highly valued by the participating pupils and serve to deepen the pupils' prayer life.
- Many pupils take part in activities that help improve the Catholic character of the school through their day to day conduct and contributions, and specifically as members of a range of pupil groups who have a particular job to do. For example, the Catholic ambassadors consult with pupils and staff about the quality of the Catholic Life and how it might improve. There are many examples of the impact of

this group, which include a greater use of art in the expression of faith and the plans for an attractive prayer garden.

- Support for vulnerable learners is very effective; all pupils are seen as made in the image and likeness of God and are well supported to achieve their full potential. An example of this level of support was the appointment in September 2017 of a specialist assistant to target and help pupils with emotional needs.
- All staff promote very high standards of behaviour and are exemplary role models. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very good. They always have positive attitudes to learning and show respect and care for one another almost all the time.
- The school has instilled skills of reflection in its pupils as a way of dealing with any issues of concern or conflict. Self-evaluation and forgiveness feature as part of the process of addressing negative choices. For example, a pupil will work through a reflect and repair sheet with a member of staff when there has been some difficult behaviour.
- The work and influence of the parish priest, the assistant priest and members of the parish is significant in the contribution it makes to the Catholic Life. Sacramental preparation, led by the parish, enriches the faith of the pupils. They talk joyfully about the spiritual journey that they are on and how they are embracing the opportunity to become closer to God through the sacraments.
- The commitment of the principal and all staff to the spiritual life of the pupils, both in school and in the parish, is praiseworthy. The principal is visible in the parish supporting the liturgy through music. Her colleagues regularly attend the weekend celebrations, showing commitment to the faith journey of the young people they teach during the week.
- The school weaves the Gospel message of social concern through its thoughtful curriculum. Pupils appreciate and understand the dynamics of other world faiths through planned lessons where different year groups will engage in detailed study of a particular faith. This has resulted in pupils recognising and respecting how deeply held beliefs shape lives and communities.
- In assemblies, circle time, lessons and class worship the pupils have opportunities to consider global issues, care for the environment, justice and equality. These activities have given the pupils the confidence to share their thoughts and social concerns in a mature manner.
- Over the past two years, the school environment has improved. When entering the school, the pupils, staff and external visitors are reminded that the school cherishes its purpose and the diocesan mission of 'Making Christ Known'.
- School leaders, with the ideas and help of the pupils, have created sacred spaces around the school to support knowledge of the liturgy and awareness of key elements of faith. The school continues to look for ways to enhance its buildings to bring faith alive.
- The pupils' very good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development are well supported using the 'All that I Am' diocesan scheme and with the involvement of sensitive visiting staff from the health sector. The school is looking to improve this work further by initiating the use of supplementary materials.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School.

- In a short time, the outstanding leadership of the recently appointed principal has improved the Catholic Life of the school. Her sincere faith, energy, and ability to unite the school family in its mission has resulted in a school where pupils are loved, valued and are confident in their relationship with God.

- An effective programme for self-evaluation is now in place. This involves senior school staff, governors and multi academy company (MAC) directors. Governors visit the school regularly, both to have a presence in the community and to keep informed about any developments. These leaders routinely view, evaluate and consider the quality of the Catholic Life. A three-year development plan, based on monitoring, is in place which sets out actions for improvement.
- The governors can easily cite examples of how their self-evaluation has had a positive impact on the school, including: the improvement of the school environment to reflect its Catholic Faith; the deepening of liturgical knowledge amongst the staff team; the greater involvement of the school in the life of the parish and the stronger links with parents over matters of faith.
- The detail of the Catholic Life provision is comprehensively shared with governors by the principal in her reports and frequent discussions. The MAC directors are well informed and have a high level of confidence in the principal and Religious Education subject leader. This in turn has led to the MAC leaders asking the school staff to share some of their successful initiatives across the MAC for the benefit of other schools.
- The principal has ensured that the staff team are very aware of the aspirations she has had for rapid improvement. Staff meetings begin with evaluations of Catholic Life to raise awareness of what makes the school distinctive in its mission. This thoughtful approach has benefitted all staff, but especially the good number of new teachers, who are increasingly skilful in enhancing the spiritual atmosphere of the school.
- The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company has also played a part in coaching governors and staff. Training sessions have resulted in school leaders being well able to define the strengths and weaknesses of the school and inform the direction for progress.
- School leaders have seen a growth in parent engagement because of a more direct sharing of the Catholic Life between home and school. This is seen in the greater number of parent and family members attending Masses, assemblies and supporting school trips.
- The principal and governors are presiding over a gradual growth in parental confidence in the school as a Catholic community. Plans have been drawn up to extend the school in the early years and thus engage with the parents at an earlier stage in their children's lives.
- The school communicates with parents in a variety of ways. However, communication about the spiritual direction of the school and the impact of the liturgical year on the lives of the pupils would be improved with more regular information and the updating of the school's website.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

**How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- The quality of Religious Education is good.
- Assessment data provides an accurate picture of the progress made by pupils in Religious Education as they move through the school.
- On entry attainment is low, with nearly a third of all pupils failing to achieve an expected level in their Reception assessments of Religious Education. However, by the time they reach the end of key stage 1, the majority of pupils achieve the expected level, with nearly half of the pupils exceeding this level. The picture is similar at the end of key stage 2. Most pupils leave the school having made very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education.
- Progress in Religious Education is broadly consistent with the other core subjects of English and maths.
- There are some small differences in the achievement of specific groups, which are being addressed by interventions. For example, teaching assistants work closely with pupils who have special educational needs to support their understanding of Religious Education and allow them to develop their use of liturgical language.
- Pupils sincerely enjoy their learning in Religious Education lessons.
- To each new lesson they bring sound prior learning, which gives them a basis for extending their knowledge and skills.
- They listen, reflect and respond well using their comprehensive knowledge of stories from the Bible and liturgical themes. They can translate the messages of the Gospels in to their own lives and can talk about how their faith strengthens their ability to respond to the needs of others or challenges that they might face.
- Most of the work produced in their Religious Education books and journals is good. It is neat and carefully presented, well-illustrated and bears witness to the depth of pupils' spiritual thinking.
- Pupils respond well to the questions posed by their teachers when marking their exercise books. Pupils' answers show that they have thought carefully about the particular elements of faith taught in each lesson.
- Some work in pupils' Religious Education books is not of the same high standard as the work in their English books. There are some examples of inaccuracies of liturgical language and of work that is unfinished.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exceptional. They have become accustomed to purposeful routines which help them to concentrate on their work but also allows them independence in their learning.
- This positive atmosphere for learning supports deep personal discussion and the sharing of spiritual ideas and values. This was well illustrated when a Year 6 class were sensitively talking about bereavement and funerals. They were comfortable with one another in exchanging feelings about family experiences of loss and how their faith sustained them.
- Pupils are clear about how to improve in Religious Education. They understand the marking policy and respond to the prompts used by their class teachers. They are motivated by assessment bookmarks, which are a clear system of targets in the Religious Education curriculum. These are stuck into pupils' books and a copy is also sent home. Pupils are eager to move successfully through the programme of Religious Education work set out on these bookmarks.
- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good.
- The best teaching is delivered by teachers who fully utilise their voice, energy and subject knowledge to very effectively engage and instruct their pupils.

- These teachers are clear about the learning that they wish to impart i.e. they know what the pupils should experience and understand, so that almost all pupils make progress in the lesson.
- Religious Education lessons provide a range of well planned content, ideas and emotions, which are delivered through careful questioning, taking account of different pupils' needs.
- Good teamwork between classroom staff is a key ingredient to successful lessons.
- Teachers effectively utilise assessments to plan activities for their pupils. Differentiated tasks, which are supported by teaching assistants, help most pupils achieve very well in lessons.
- Some lessons, and the resulting work in pupils' books, are not as consistently good over time. Where teaching is less strong, pupils are not clear about the learning intentions and cannot engage in a spiritual dialogue.
- Teachers modelling tasks for pupils, having higher expectations of work and challenging pupils to think and discuss issues of faith more profoundly could improve this.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- In the past two years the governors and school principal have driven the importance of Religious Education in the curriculum. They have made certain that the subject is a priority, meeting the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Through planned and regular monitoring activities, reports in curriculum committee and analysis of Religious Education assessment data, the school leaders have gained a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of progress and attainment in each year group.
- The coaching of teaching, sharing of strategies in staff meetings and targets in teachers' performance management have all helped the drive to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Governors challenge the principal and senior staff to address any identified weaknesses. This is borne out in the governors' expectations for the recruitment of new staff. Governors aspire to recruit staff who will further enhance the Religious Education provision in the school.
- The principal and Religious Education subject leader have designed and delivered a curriculum which inspires, meets the needs of all pupils and is rich in liturgical content. Moreover, the principal has worked passionately to prompt and support her colleagues in delivering the curriculum to the pupils.
- Teaching staff, who have joined the team more recently confirmed their appreciation of the support they have received in building their subject knowledge and creating strategies for effective teaching of Religious Education.
- Whilst the principal and Religious Education leader systematically monitor the pupils' attainment, they have not securely identified why some groups of pupils are achieving less well than others.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Outstanding
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.**The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- Collective Worship is outstanding.
- Collective Worship in the school absorbs all and has a most positive devotional benefit.
- When experiencing the celebration of Mass with the parish, Gospel assembly, class prayer or class liturgy, the pupils and staff are closer to God and one another through their shared worship.
- Pupils understand what worship is about and are comfortable when praying. They say community prayers with passion, pride and reverence. They reflect silently and thoughtfully.
- The pupils appreciate that singing is a form of prayer and their high vocal quality contributes to uplifting, prayerful celebrations.
- Collective Worship is well organised and skilfully delivered and includes doctrinal knowledge alongside the devotional experience. For example, during an infant Gospel assembly led by the principal, the theme of 'love' was explored and linked to the mission of the school. The pupils enhanced the sacred atmosphere by processing with candles, leading prayers and acting out real life scenes to inspire their fellow pupils to consider God's message of love. Artefacts and engaging images illustrated the theme beautifully and everyone participated in the joyous and uplifting singing of a carefully chosen hymn.
- The greatest strength of Collective Worship in the school is that pupils of all ages are fully involved in designing, shaping and delivering worship.
- The principal and her team have launched the 'Power of Prayer' structure in each class. This initiative involves each class having groups of pupils who independently consider, prepare and deliver a class liturgy each week. Pupils are given freedom to explore themes, which are close to their hearts and can be delivered using resources and approaches that they choose. Adults in the classes will give support and guidance, but the level of pupil autonomy is impressive.
- As a result of the inspiring Collective Worship, pupils can reflect on the messages given and can explain what they can do to improve their lives. They speak of 'becoming future saints'.
- New prayer books have been designed and given to pupils recently. This is leading to a better knowledge of traditional prayers for pupils of all ages.
- Prayer intentions for the needs of the wider world are shared in a meaningful way, helping the pupils to understand and empathise with their global family.

- Pupils like to be involved in prayer and many will volunteer to say the Rosary with the neighbouring Salesian Sisters every Tuesday lunchtime.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- Staff members, with the sensitive support of the parish priest, lead liturgy in an absorbing and sacred manner.
- Leaders and governors have an excellent knowledge of the liturgical year and are committed to providing every opportunity for quality Collective Worship to navigate the school family through the seasons of the Church.
- The regular evaluations of Collective Worship, undertaken by school leaders, have led to an increase in the frequency of Mass, a revised timetable for assemblies and a growth in the number of celebrations for important feast days.
- The 'Power of Prayer' initiative, where almost all pupils prepare worship has come about as a direct result of the leaders' evaluations of Collective Worship. The impact on pupils has been powerful in terms of the ownership of prayer and the sincerity generated in the hearts of the children.
- Furthermore, these evaluations have resulted in improved opportunities for parental involvement and engagement of members of the parish community.
- When planning Collective Worship, the principal and staff ensure that the content is relevant to the lives of the pupils. For example, during a Year 3 class liturgy, the teacher prompted pupils to reflect and discuss their own mothers, having heard scripture readings about Mary. Their conversations were animated and supportive.
- Training for all stakeholders has taken many forms. Newer staff have been coached in delivery of Collective Worship; governors and leaders have been inspired by training and spiritual discussion at MAC level. The school now seeks to engage with partner schools within the Dominic Barberi MAC to further improve the monitoring of worship and form a 'Catholic Council' to share ideas and improve practice.
- This thorough, creative and evaluative approach to the spiritual experiences provided by and for the pupils, serves to affirm that the young people at Our Lady's School are precious and loved.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	139477
Local authority	Oxfordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Multi Academy Company
Age range	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	279
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Mr David Forster
Principal	Miss Tara Davies
Telephone number	01865779176
Website address	www.our-ladys.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	ourladys@dbmac.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School has 279 pupils on roll. The school serves the parish of Our Lady Help of Christians in Cowley, close to Oxford city centre.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 80%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is inline with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in school leadership, which include a new principal and new governors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspector observed teaching across 6 Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the Catholic Life link governor, the principal, the Religious Education subject leader, parish priest, directors and the executive principal of the MAC.
- The inspector attended a class Mass in the parish church, class Collective Worship, a Gospel assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, 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' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.