



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Fordbridge Road, Kingshurst, Birmingham, B37 6LW

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Inspection dates 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
Reporting Inspector Mr Dominic Collins

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Number on roll	240
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Dr Marcus Brain
Telephone number	0121 770 3168
E-mail address	office@st-anthonys.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2010
DFE School Number	334/3510
Unique Reference Number	<b>104103</b>

**Headteacher** Mr Cieran Flaherty

Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2

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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 3 full RE lessons with the headteacher.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils, including school council members, to evaluate the impact of teaching and their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, RE leaders, the chair of governors, RE link governor, staff, parish priest and parents.
- The inspector observed 2 examples of collective worship, a whole school Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of teaching and learning in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the school's development plan, teachers' planning, RE assessment systems, learning journals and key documents were read alongside the self evaluation.

## Information about the school

- St Anthony's is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. John and St Anthony in north Solihull.
- The school is situated in an area of high social deprivation and is part of a major regeneration plan.
- The number of baptised Catholic pupils is currently 29%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as is the number with special needs and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is below average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.
- Since the last diocesan inspection (October 2010) there have been some significant changes of staff including the headteacher appointed in January 2013, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher/RE leader appointed 2015.
- New appointments include 5 members of teaching staff.
- The governing body has also faced significant change since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new chair in autumn 2013.

## Main Findings

- St Anthony's school evaluation correctly judges the quality of its Catholic life, collective worship and religious education to be good. Evidence obtained during the inspection confirms that these judgements are fully justified.
- A comprehensive range of effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of these key areas and as a consequence this results in an accurate profile of quality assurance.
- The recently appointed school leadership communicates a shared vision to provide the best possible Catholic education for all pupils, through the high quality RE action plan, prioritised through evaluation outcomes and integral to the overall school improvement objectives.
- St Anthony's is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong Catholic identity and outstanding ethos where pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in their faith journey.

## School self evaluation

### Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- School self evaluation presents an accurate appraisal of the quality and impact of its Catholic life and RE provision because it is securely based upon a continuous cycle of effective monitoring and evaluation processes that are thorough, informative, shared and consistently applied.
- These positive outcomes correctly identify areas of strength and those in need of review, thus providing the information necessary to plan for future development in order to move the school forward.
- The accuracy of evaluation is perceived by the school as an essential foundation leading to a continuous programme of school improvement. As a consequence of establishing a systematic approach to evaluation, it is able to successfully promote its Catholic life.
- 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.
- Evaluation of Catholic life is rooted in a thorough knowledge and awareness of the school as a whole and is at the heart of its mission in action.
- The newly formed school leadership is passionate about developing all aspects of RE and Catholic life. There is strong evidence that refinements have been made to existing good practice in order to enhance and develop school evaluation systems and processes. For example St Anthony's value award and recently revised behaviour policy 'shine like Jesus' are already having a positive effect.
- The school has developed a formal framework to determine the quality of its Catholic life that include; audits, learning walks and focussed observations conducted by the senior leadership, RE leader, parish priest and governors.
- The contribution pupils make to the evaluation process through school council representations, questionnaires 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.

- Communication with parents is well developed. They are kept fully informed about school and are invited to express their views informally and through Catholic life questionnaires.
- Prayer and collective worship underpins the Catholic life of the school and as a consequence of the effective measures that are in place to evaluate its quality and impact, is a significant strength.
- All staff receive support and development opportunities relating to planning and leading collective worship. Good practice is regularly shared.
- Outcomes of monitoring through observation, audit and pupil discussion, led by the senior leadership, parish priest and RE leader, confirm that pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to share their own prayers and petitions together. Evidence can be seen in the classrooms and around the school in pupils' thoughtful TSP (Thank you, Sorry, Please) prayer displays.
- The school intends to build upon these excellent foundations and has placed the continuing development of opportunities for pupil led prayer and reflections from the Gospel readings at Mass as a focus within the RE action plan.
- Evidence of all monitoring and evaluation analysis is comprehensively recorded in a school RE profile that is regularly reviewed to track the impact of action taken.
- In accordance with the plan for overall school development, RE evaluation outcomes form the basis of an action plan that is discussed and agreed by the full governing body and tabled at their termly meetings as part of the monitoring cycle.

## **Governance**

- The recently reformed governing body have a strong commitment to the Catholic life of the school. There is a broad base of expertise among its membership and therefore, while being fully supportive they are able to offer an appropriate level of challenge to hold the school to account.
- Governors make a significant contribution to self evaluation, are well organised and kept fully informed through the fruitful partnership of the chair, RE link governor and parish priest, with the school leadership. They have a clear understanding of their role and discharge their responsibilities effectively.
- Termly reports from the headteacher and RE leader, a cycle of focussed monitoring processes involving governors together with frequent informal visits, enable governors to know the school well. They perceive monitoring its Catholicity and spiritual direction as their highest priority.
- Governors are fully involved in whole school development and they ensure that agreed RE action planning is adequately funded and resourced to support identified objectives.
- A systematic monitoring and evaluation programme outlined in the current RE development profile reflects the accuracy of evaluation outcomes. Governors recognise the need to support continuing staff development opportunities offered through the diocese, including those directly linked to a Catholic life performance management target for all staff.

## Religious Education

- School self evaluation is reliable in its judgement that pupils make consistently good progress in their religious education throughout the school. This judgement is based upon the evidence of a variety of individual performance data derived from RE assessments based on diocesan guidance.
- Practical, effective systems are used by the school for monitoring teaching and learning to determine the impact of its work in RE.
- Well structured formal and informal processes, applied to monitor provision and outcomes, are based upon agreed areas of focus within overall programmes of whole school RE development.
- The quality of religious education provision is robustly monitored by the senior leadership, and governors, in accordance with the monitoring cycle of other key areas of learning. This effective collaboration is a strength of the school and results in very positive outcomes for pupils.
- The staff are very supportive of each other and the recently appointed RE leader works closely with them, leading RE lessons with non-Catholic staff and offering additional support, identified through evaluation outcomes. As a consequence, all children are able to fully access the RE curriculum.
- Regular scrutiny of lesson planning, assessment of pupils' work in RE, class discussions, pupil interviews, lesson observations and focussed learning walks, give a clear and reliable insight into the quality of RE provision and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Following baseline assessment on entry into school pupil progress is tracked by the subject leader. These systems are well managed and meticulous records are collated in order that appropriate interventions can be applied to ensure pupils make consistent progress.
- In order to monitor the quality of teaching and maintain the high standards expected, lesson observations are conducted by the senior leadership, in accordance with a termly schedule. Written feedback is shared in a supportive and professional manner.
- The RE link governor regularly supports teaching and learning and liaises with the RE leader to share all monitoring and evaluation outcomes.
- A comprehensive RE action plan is broken down into specific focus areas. This is an excellent working document and because it is formulated in a uniform profile, analysis of agreed action taken can be clearly tracked towards expected outcomes.
- Effective systems are in place to support and develop the skills of newly appointed teachers and for those who do not have a background in the Catholic faith.
- The RE curriculum, based upon the Curriculum Directory and the diocesan programme *Learning and Growing as the People of God*, is carefully planned and regularly monitored to evaluate its quality and ensures continuity and progression within and across each key stage.

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

- Attainment on entry to the school, in RE is very low. Very few children are used to any form of prayer or religious experience. However, progress of pupils, relative to the evidence of baseline assessments is at least good.
- Pupils receive a very positive start to their faith journey and there is a rapid momentum of improvement. By the end of Key Stage 1, evidence of assessment data, shows that the majority of children achieve expectations in RE in line with other key areas of the curriculum.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the large majority of pupils are working at or above expected levels in RE; thus reflecting the effectiveness of systems the school employs to monitor and evaluate the quality and outcomes of RE provision.
- The quality of teaching and learning is a constant focus within the evaluation cycle. Records of teaching in RE shows a profile of good and some outstanding teaching over time.
- Accurate evaluation has influenced deployment of the excellent classroom support staff and as a consequence, has a significant impact on the quality of learning for individuals and groups of children, who benefit from a programme of more targeted support.
- The daily life of the school is monitored by vigilant and caring staff, who serve as excellent role models in their guidance of all pupils to live according to Gospel values.
- It is clearly evident that this extremely effective whole school approach to evaluating the principles of its mission significantly influences the outstanding school ethos. The attitudes and excellent behaviour of pupils observed throughout the inspection, reflects the impact of its success.
- An appropriate range of assessments to support learning are built into RE lesson planning. For example, skilled questioning observed in RE lessons that elicited thoughtful responses from pupils were used effectively as a teaching aid in order to gauge their understanding of key areas. The school marking policy is consistently applied and provides good quality feedback to pupils, informing them of how well they have done and identifying the next steps to make further progress.
- RE provision is very well resourced and enriched by opportunities for children to contribute to and benefit from a variety of high quality religious experiences that stimulate their enquiry and serves to deepen an understanding of how they can apply their faith in daily life.
- Prayer and worship are well developed and form an integral feature of school life. Pupils are exposed to a variety of worship styles and in addition to traditional prayers and reflection, are encouraged to compose their own petitions and spontaneous prayers. Children engage enthusiastically in songs of prayers and liturgical responses during Mass and assembly.
- The school is well supported by the parish priest who takes an active role in supporting staff and parents in sacramental preparation and is a key partner in developing the prayer life of the school.

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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.

- The development cycle represents a consistent momentum of improvement over time and the positive impact it has on the Catholic life of the school, reflects the commitment drive and vision of its leadership.

### **Recommendations**

- In the light of the significant changes in school staffing and the governing body a continuing focus on appropriate professional development and training opportunities is recommended in order to move the school forward from good to outstanding.



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November 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

St Anthony's School provides a good Catholic education for its pupils. This judgement is based upon findings from accurate self-evaluation and is fully justified by evidence obtained during the inspection. The school has an excellent Catholic ethos and through the care and encouragement your children receive from the headteacher and his staff, they enjoy school and develop as happy eager learners. Through well planned, effective teaching in RE and a rich, stimulating curriculum, your children make good progress in their continuing faith journey. The Catholic mission of the school underpins all aspects of its daily life and the evidence of their spiritual and moral development is demonstrated by the way pupils embrace it.

Collective worship is good and prayer is integral to the life of the school. Pupils engage enthusiastically in hymns, prayers and liturgical responses during Mass and assembly.

The school is very well supported by an enthusiastic and committed governing body and parish priest, all with a shared vision to provide the best possible Catholic education for its pupils.

Inspection confirms that the school has identified areas for further development as a result of accurate self-evaluation and these form the focus of an agreed action plan that is already in operation.

It was a pleasure to inspect St. Anthony's School and share how much your children engage in their learning so enthusiastically. I enjoyed my visit very much and was made most welcome by all. Your children are a credit to the school, to their families and all who care for them.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Collins  
Diocesan Inspector