



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ELIZABETH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL TAMWORTH

Inspection dates 26th – 27th November 2013
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 | 4 -11 years |
| Number on roll | 185 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governors | Mr Anthony Mason |
| School address | Claremont Road Coton Green Tamworth Staffordshire B79 8EN |
| Telephone number | 01827 475860 |
| E-mail address | headteacher@st-elizabeths.staff.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | October 2008 |
| DFE School number | 860/3478 |
| Unique Reference Number | 124367 |

Headteacher Mrs Jane Rowlands

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, 1 with the subject leader and 2 part lessons. The inspector also visited 3 other classes across the school where RE lessons were being taught. 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 held meetings with the chair of governors, RE link governor, parish priest, staff and spoke informally to parents. He observed a school Mass, a school assembly 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. He looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about Catholic life, which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Elizabeth's is a smaller than average one form entry Catholic primary school serving the parish of St John the Baptist, Tamworth, and St Michael and St James, Haunton. There are currently 185 pupils on roll of whom 60% are baptised Catholics. The majority of pupils 91% are from white British origin and currently 9% of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is below average as is the percentage of children with a special education need. Due to increased numbers on roll since the last inspection, a substantial building work programme was completed in the summer 2010. Accreditations awarded to the school include; Healthy School Status, Activemark and the Silver Eco award. The school is working towards full dyslexia friendly status and Rights Respecting School Award.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school judges that the quality of its Catholic life and religious education are good. Evidence obtained during the inspection confirms that these judgements are fully justified. The processes used in school self evaluation follow a thorough, personalised, structured programme embracing a range of innovative strategies that are consistently applied by all staff and therefore presents an effective cycle of RE quality assurance. The school provides its pupils with a high quality religious education that enables them to follow Christ through the school mission. The school leadership provides clear, directional guidance and together with the support and commitment of dedicated staff and governors, successfully promote and maintain its strong Catholic ethos which has a powerful impact on the spiritual and moral development of its pupils. Close links are established with the parish, thus creating a real sense of community within which, pupils thrive. Parents speak well of the school and warmly acknowledge the care and encouragement their children receive.

School self evaluation

School self evaluation is impressive in its detail and comprehensive analysis and presents an accurate appraisal of the quality of Catholic life and RE provision. This provides the information necessary to inform an RE action plan that is being systematically addressed. School self evaluation rightly judges that pupil attainment and progress in religious education is good, evidenced from their initial starting points indicated by baseline data.

Pupils' progress and achievement are closely tracked as they progress through the school and excellent detailed records of data analysis are maintained by the RE subject leader and appropriately actioned where necessary. Current monitoring systems include assessments from diocesan curriculum strategy units, pupils' work recorded in RE books, interviews and questionnaires. Assessments for learning are also built into lesson planning. The evaluation of this cycle of monitoring reveals a rapid and consistent improvement of pupils progress across each key stage and there is evidence to show that because of the high quality teaching they receive, knowledge and understanding of their faith continues to develop. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are meeting expected levels of attainment in RE and the momentum continues so that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment of pupils is generally above diocesan expectations. In order to build upon this firm foundation, the school is currently focussing on the use and application of skills in RE, together with the introduction of personal targets.

The school's judgement that its Catholic life and collective worship are good is reliably based upon a cycle of effective monitoring and evaluating processes. There is clear evidence of the distinctive nature of St Elizabeth's as a Catholic school. The school mission underpins its daily Catholic life and is understood, shared and practised by all. A specific emphasis is given to monitoring and evaluating its success, using a comprehensive and innovative range of informative audits that have been devised by the subject leader, who in turn, collates the formal and informal contributions made by staff, governors, parents and children. For example, liturgy and prayer are an integral part of each school day the quality of which is evaluated and shared. As a result, an excellent collective worship planner is now used as a very effective developmental guide across each key stage, which also highlights an appropriate range of available resources that can be utilised to enhance pupils' spiritual awareness and understanding. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They are guided by all staff who recognise their responsibility to uphold and promote Gospel values and ensure pupils live up to the high expectations made of them. Aspects of an effective school ethos audit, built upon the foundations and practice of the mission statement, is conducted termly by the RE subject leader and shared with the senior leadership team, where outcomes are evaluated and targets are formulated to share with the RE link governor. For example; justice and peace are promoted as characteristics of the Catholic faith and the pastoral care of the children is reflected in the school mission in action. Pupil voice is given a high priority and they know how much they are valued. The school council is well organised and effective and members respond enthusiastically when their views are sought and given consideration.

Well established systems are in place to ensure that RE provision is regularly monitored and evaluated and fully justifies the school judgement that provision for the subject is good. This cycle is led by the RE subject leader who conducts book trawls, planning scrutiny, pupil and parent questionnaires and the appraisal of collective worship. These outcomes are also shared with all staff and the RE link governor. For example; from recent monitoring it was decided to introduce an RE target for children, linked to their own progress. The RE curriculum is based upon the diocesan curriculum strategy and is enriched by a variety of well-matched activities. RE policy is regularly reviewed and new initiatives are implemented to improve provision. The quality of RE teaching is regularly monitored by the senior leadership and RE subject leader, to maintain the high standards expected. Records show a consistent pattern of good teaching throughout the school. The reliability of this judgement is fully supported by the good and outstanding teaching observed during the inspection.

The governing body are effective. They know the school well, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are dedicated in supporting the school to be

successful in its mission. A range of formal and informal systems enables them to monitor how the school promotes the spiritual development of all pupils. The RE link governor provides high quality support and regularly liaises with the senior leadership and RE subject leader. Governors are well informed and offer a substantial input to school self evaluation. The school is also very well supported by the parish priest who is a frequent visitor. He spends time in class with the children and meets with the subject leader in order to discuss RE outcomes and liturgical planning, thus providing a seamless link between school and parish community.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Overall, pupils make excellent progress in their religious education from their initial average starting point evidenced by baseline data, on entry to the Foundation Stage. Pupils receive an excellent start to their faith journey, consequently by the end of Key Stage 1 they are meeting expected attainment levels. As a result of consistently good teaching, stimulating well matched tasks that enable pupils to enjoy their lessons and engage fully, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with or above diocesan expectations. The quality of work in RE is of the same standard in literacy. All pupils are very well supported in their learning. A variety of teaching styles and the excellent use of resources enable them to access RE through drama, music and art. Where a pupil's religious knowledge is in advance of their recording capabilities, they receive alternative, focused support to enhance their learning from well deployed and effective classroom support staff. More able pupils are encouraged to develop their RE skills and work more independently on appropriate, well matched tasks. Excellent examples of these strategies were a lesson focus to investigate the disciple relationship between Peter and Jesus and another using the knowledge of prayer to plan a collective worship.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is excellent. An extremely positive ethos permeates the school in every way. Pupils understand the school mission and its values. They were instrumental in defining the motto: 'we listen, learn and grow with Jesus.' The children themselves are fine ambassadors, bright and cheerful they conduct themselves around the school showing genuine friendship, care and respect for one another. The school works hard to foster good relationships so that pupils can enjoy and experience a stimulating learning programme within an atmosphere of love, trust and security. Staff are excellent role models, set firm and clear boundaries in order to nourish values and expectations of mutual respect. Justice and peace are strongly promoted and children behave in a way that reflects this. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to engage in a variety of responsibilities such as school council membership, house captains, and lunchtime leaders and in the planning of liturgical celebrations and assemblies. The children respond eagerly to these challenges and perform their duties with pride. The school council is a very effective group which meets regularly with staff and projects the views of others. A beautiful sensory garden has been developed as a result of pupil views and is meticulously cared for by the school eco-group.

Prayer and collective worship is a particular strength and is central to the life of each school day, where there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray and reflect together. Pupils engage freely in open prayer and listen and respond to each other. The provision of collective worship is extremely well monitored by the subject leader and evaluations are shared and used to enhance its quality and practice. The celebration of school Mass during the inspection was of the highest quality, confidently led by the children through their

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.

readings, drama and music. A well organised group of musicians supports lively, joyous, original songs that readily engage all present.

The school leaders are very successful in developing the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher provides clear, directional guidance and together with her leadership team communicates a clear vision for the continuing development of RE and Catholic life. Under the direction of the headteacher, the RE subject leader ensures high quality provision and outcomes for RE through her excellent organisation, management and support to all staff. In view of the quality of the processes for self evaluation that the school has developed to monitor and evaluate its Catholic life and religious education, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Recommendations

- Maintain professional development for all staff in religious education through the diocesan training programme and school cluster group initiative in order to address areas identified through self evaluation.
- Ensure that new and existing members of the governing body receive appropriate ongoing training linked to their roles and responsibilities.