



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Springfield Road, Uttoxeter, Staffs, ST14 7JX

Inspection dates 9th - 10th June 2014
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Academy |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 years |
| Number on roll | 209 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of Directors |
| Chair of Academy Committee | Mr John Pennington |
| Telephone number | 01889 562702 |
| E-mail address | office@st-josephs-uttoxeter.staffs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | June 2008 |
| DFE School Number | 860/3474 |
| Unique Reference Number | 138727 |
| Principal | Mrs Joyce Cassidy |
| Previous inspection: | 2 |
| This inspection: | 1 |

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY

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 three full RE lessons, two with the headteacher and one with the subject leader. 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. She held meetings with the chair of the board of directors, staff, and lay chaplain. She observed an assembly and a prayer service 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. She 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 feedback to pupils, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Joseph's average sized Catholic primary school within the parish of St Mary's Uttoxeter. There are 209 children on roll and a further 24 children in the nursery. There is a 58% Catholic population. St Joseph's serves a relatively small, semi-rural area. The school is part of the Painsley Catholic Academy, a multi-academy company (MAC) in the Archdiocese of Birmingham which formed in September 2012 following an innovative federation of seven schools which began in January 2011. The majority of pupils are white British with an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is sixteen. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities is thirty-nine, with twelve additional pupils on the gifted and talented register. Attainment on entry is above the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation the school judges all aspects of its Catholic life and RE to be outstanding. This judgement is secure because it is based on regular auditing, meticulous monitoring and expert evaluation. Development is consistently and effectively driven forward by ensuring that the findings from monitoring and evaluation are fed into detailed, frequently reviewed, clear and quantifiable improvement plans. There are systems in place to enable pupils, parents, all staff and directors and academy representatives to feed their views into the monitoring and evaluation of RE and the Catholic life of the school. A great strength underpinning improvement is the principal and her senior leadership team's in-depth knowledge of the Catholic life of the school and provision and delivery of RE. The school is further supported in its pursuit of excellence by the additional monitoring and evaluation and expertise provided by its membership of the well-established and effective Painsley Catholic Academy. The school has an excellent capacity to improve because of the competency and commitment of leadership and the improvement processes they have in place.

School self-evaluation

Pupils' attainment, progress and learning in RE are reliably judged to be above average. Through lesson observation, pupil voice, review, work scrutiny, data analysis, pupil progress meetings and 'the outstanding practitioners programme', it is clearly evidenced that the quality of pupils' learning in RE is outstanding. Through observation, pupil evaluation, voice and discussions, spiritual life review across the MAC, feedback through excellent parish links with St Mary's parish, and work scrutiny it is evident that the way

pupils contribution to, and benefit from, the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Staff meeting minutes also contribute to the school's ability to make accurate judgements about this aspect of school life. The school dependably judges the way in which pupils respond to and participate in collective worship to be outstanding. Again it bases its judgements on a range of monitoring methods comprising pupil voice, gathering of stakeholder views, spiritual life MAC inspection. This information is effectively evaluated and fed into improvement plans which are successfully implemented.

School evaluation accurately judges the way in which all leaders, directors, the principal and senior management, monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school to be outstanding. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school are ongoing and rigorous and include reviews with the Painsley Academy reviews of spiritual life, RE, mission statement, a spiritual life audit, input into the mission and strategy committee of directors, and feedback from the strong parish links. The principal leads by example as do all leaders and post-holders. All have spiritual life as a prerequisite of their role. The academy board of directors know the school well through their monitoring. All reviews are shared and debated with directors. The mission and strategy committee has a remit to monitor and develop the Catholic ethos of the multi-academy. Staff attend directors' meetings as required. Directors are able to evaluate the spiritual life of the 7 schools and compare and develop successful strategies across all of the schools. This impacts favourably on St Joseph's School. The spiritual life section of the school development plan is deliberately on the first page to be an outward sign of the most important aspect of the school.

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is judged by school self-evaluation to be outstanding. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work in RE include lesson observation, work scrutiny, line management discussion, a development cycle, appraisal, pupil voice, staff meetings, MAC inspection and reports to directors. Moderation takes place three times per year to ensure consistency. All lesson observations are centralised for analysis in a teaching and learning database which enables staff to focus on development points through St Joseph's and the MAC's outstanding practitioners' programme. All this ensure rigorous analysis and a drive for improvement.

School self-evaluation correctly asserts that the way teaching promotes purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment of pupils in RE is outstanding. Quality of teaching and learning is monitored through observations, autumn and summer term, the outstanding practitioners' programme, appraisal and subject inspection. Regular review of the teachers' subject knowledge enables the principal and the subject leader to provide support and plan strategies to ensure children receive the best possible provision in RE. Assessment and marking is effective. Layered targets are given to children at the start of each unit of work, ensuring that pupils fully understand what they need to do in order to achieve. These targets are then highlighted at the end of each unit ensuring teachers and pupils are aware of achievement. Marking and feedback includes 'two stars and a wish'; two comments indicate what the child has achieved successfully and a final comment or question provides a point for development. The curriculum is regularly monitored and evaluation has fed into the development plan the need to further develop the school's multi-faith week. Spiritual life audit, schemes of learning, lesson observation, work scrutiny and MAC inspection reveal a curriculum that clearly contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. This is the highest priority for the school.

The provision of collective worship is judged to be outstanding. This sound judgement is based on evidence gained through the spiritual life review, pupil voice/parent voice, lesson and other forms of observation which indicate the quality of collective worship is

outstanding. This information is evaluated and fed into improvement plans. Improvement is ongoing because it is part of the very fabric of the school and a culture embraced by all members of this inclusive community who feel valued and appreciated. Monitoring is ongoing and rigorous; feedback is truthful, honest and challenging but it is effective because it takes place in a truly Christian ethos where all members of staff feel valued and appreciated.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Through work scrutinies, lesson observation and pupils' progress meetings, it is clear that children's progress is good in RE, with Years 2, 3 and 6 performing at an outstanding level. Pupils are confident learners who are willing to take risks and contribute to their learning. Pupils are religiously literate and able to express their viewpoints using references to scripture, respect the views of others and challenge misconceptions. Children enjoy RE, recognising the value of the subject, but also the opportunity to develop personal, spiritual, moral and vocational responses. All children are monitored in their progress individually and within learning groups. Intervention is put in place if there is a need for differentiation.

Children are proud of their school community and its mission. Pupils are highly enthusiastic and motivated as they embrace the Catholic life of the school. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, evident in their respect and treatment of others in the local and wider community. Behaviour records show that the vast majority of pupils have strong moral, Christian values which demonstrate love and respect for others. Exclusions do not take place and children from other schools experiencing emotional and behavioural problems benefit greatly from the ethos of St Joseph's and are helped to settle into school life and are supported by all staff and their peers. Children have a huge desire to help others, exemplified through a wide range of charitable activities. Pupil voice includes regular discussion on Catholic ethos and collective worship. Children value the opportunities for prayer, reflection, retreat and liturgy and willingly contribute in Mass and lead prayer in class. Pupils help to plan class Mass and acts of worship with enthusiasm. A large number of children voluntarily attend the prayer group each week led by the lay chaplain and willingly support the half-termly school Sunday Masses including servers, readers, attendance at children's liturgy. Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect during all acts of collective worship.

The way in which leaders monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school is excellent. The Spiritual Life section of the school development plan is on the first page as an outward sign of the most important aspect of the school. The impact of recent plans include the development of a 'miracle day', an audit of spiritual, moral and vocational development, the introduction of the lay chaplain and the development of retreat experiences in light of evaluation. An image of Christ is at the centre of the cover page of development plans to reflect the school's main purpose and role. The academy board of directors know the school well through their monitoring. All inspections are shared and debated with directors. The mission and strategy committee has a remit to monitor and develop the Catholic ethos of the multi-academy. Staff attend directors' meetings as required. Staff meet termly to discuss the direction of spiritual life in the school e.g. parish links, lay chaplaincy, mission and the Year of Faith reflection have all been instrumental to the work of the staff. RE is successfully and rigorously monitored and evaluated in a variety of ways leading to thorough developmental planning and improvement to pupils learning

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.

Teaching in RE promotes purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment. Key areas for improvement are developing pupil independent learning opportunities, effective questioning techniques and sharing good practice. Lessons are well planned and entwined with the opportunity for spiritual, moral and vocational development. Lessons follow the whole school policy and include engaging starters, levelled learning objectives and outcomes, a range of activities and resources to engage all pupils. Plenary tasks skilfully assess pupil progress. Teachers are not afraid to deviate from plans in order to meet the needs of the learners. Teaching and learning is well paced and challenging for all pupils, regardless of their starting points. There is very little off-task behaviour. There are very few behavioural issues due to the high quality of teaching and learning and positive relationships. Assessment in RE is very good and part of whole school development. Peer assessment is being developed throughout the school. It is more effective with the older pupils who have the emotional maturity and skills required to give honest feedback against given criteria.

The school follows the Diocesan curriculum strategy which is evaluated and developed as necessary. The curriculum seeks to provide the children with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become 'religiously literate' and able to engage fully with life. There is an emphasis on RE enabling children to not only be aware of their rights and responsibilities but actively encourage them to explore issues of social and ethical concern. Enrichment opportunities have been adopted where appropriate to enhance learning. The 'All that I am' Diocesan sex and relationship education programme is fully integrated into schemes of work. The contribution the school curriculum makes to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is excellent.

There are opportunities for spiritual reflection and consideration of beliefs in all subject areas and there are regular explorations of vocation within subject areas and the promotion of life paths utilizing God-given gifts and talents. Spiritual opportunities are developed within lesson time in addition to liturgical and collective worship opportunities. Moral development is at the heart of the curriculum, preparing and equipping young children to engage with people of other world faiths and none. A programme has been initiated to achieve 'Rights Respecting School' status. Sacramental preparation is thorough and led by the school lay chaplain.

Provision of collective worship and opportunity for prayer is extremely good. Prayer is led by the principal on a Monday relating to the Sunday Gospel. The lay chaplain effectively delivers acts of worship which are interesting and stimulate discussion. She also works with groups of children to plan and prepare acts of worship for classes each week. The parish priest is highly supportive and ensures that Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and penitential services in Lent are celebrated each week. There is a voluntary school Sunday Mass every month which is well attended. There are opportunities for meditation and reflection during retreats and prayer and meditation built into a number of themed days. Petitions for Holy Souls are collected during November and Mass offered in school for all these intentions at the end of November. Acts of worship to mark Advent and Easter and half termly collective worships in classrooms are well attended by parents. Links are made with world events including the papal visit and prayer cards issued to children for their use. Taking part in liturgies allows children to make a positive contribution to the school community as well as enjoying and achieving. Staff prayers take place at the beginning of all briefings and meetings.

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is led and managed to an outstanding level by all leaders in order to ensure that every child uses their God-given talents. Procedures for monitoring performance are thorough and are effectively used. Children achieve well, feel safe and happy and are very proud of their school.

Recommendations

- Formalise and strengthen a vocational curriculum.
- Ensure the on-going support for new and non-Catholic teachers is monitored, evaluated and developed so that they feel fully supported in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith.



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June 2014

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Uttoxeter
9th-10th June 2014**

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.

The school judged itself to be outstanding in its Catholic life and RE. The inspection found that this judgement is fully reliable because

- Leadership and management of RE and the Catholic life of the school are excellent, as are the range of monitoring and evaluating procedures they have in place to ensure improvement.
- Your children flourish and benefit greatly from the school's vibrant Catholic life.
- Children make outstanding progress in RE because teaching is at least good and often outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and their care for each other are outstanding and reflect Christian values and teaching.
- Children respond exceptionally well to the collective worship they help so skilfully to provide.
- The staff at all levels are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and the well-being of your children

I have recommended that the school develops a more formal vocation curriculum, although your children do understand they are called to be the best that God wants them to be. A more formal programme will help them to understand more fully the depth and breadth of the meaning of vocation. We recommend they continue to strengthen the ways in which non-Catholic and new teachers become secure in their RE subject knowledge.

Your children's contribution to the excellent Catholic and prayer life of the school is outstanding. Throughout the inspection they were welcoming, courteous and informative. They are justifiably proud of their school. We thank you for the part you play in supporting your children on their journey of faith.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale
Diocesan Inspector