



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **[Part of the Holy Trinity Multi-Academy Company]**

[Wharf Lane, Brewood, Staffordshire ST19 9BG]

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Inspection date 30<sup>th</sup> June - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016  
Reporting Inspector Mrs Alexandra Beardmore

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided/Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	109
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mrs Alison Geoghegan
Telephone number	01902 851260
E-mail address	headteacher@st-marys-brewood.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2011
DFE School Number	860 3455
Unique Reference Number	142214
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Bernadette Corbett</b>
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	1

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspector observed teaching across 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lessons were conducted jointly with the headteacher who is also the subject leader.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the school committee who is the link governor for RE, the headteacher (subject leader) and parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass, a whole school collective worship 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## Information about the school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school serving the rural parish of St Marys' Brewood, drawing pupils from a wide geographical area.
- The number of children from ethnic minorities has grown but is below national average.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 56%.
- The number of pupils classed as disadvantaged is below average.
- The number of pupils with SEND is again below national average.
- Attainment on entry is low.
- Since the last inspection the school has become part of a multi academy company. There have been also been staff changes at all levels since the last inspection including a new headteacher who is also the RE subject leader.

## Main Findings

- St Mary's is a school in which the Catholic life and RE are outstanding. Leaders know its strengths and areas for development very well. The headteacher with the support of the staff drives improvements and places the Catholic life at the centre of all it does.
- Pupils show an excellent understanding of their faith living out their Catholic mission everyday.
- The children respond to and are actively involved in collective worship. They are reverent and respectful, and talk about collective worship positively.
- Children clearly enjoy their RE lessons, and they all achieve exceptionally well.

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL****Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes**

- Pupils show an excellent understanding of their faith both inside and outside the formal curriculum, contributing well in RE lessons and to the wider liturgical life of the school.
- Pupils at St Mary's live out their Catholic mission everyday. Their understanding of their faith is appropriate to their age and they take responsibility for their own actions.
- They express their faith well both in conversations and their actions. They contribute well to the liturgical life of the school and wider community.
- The children articulate the school's mission statement 'following Mary in faith' and are able to say what this means for their own life.
- Pupils show a strong commitment to Catholic values such as equality for all, forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils were especially aware of the need for mercy, during this Year of Mercy. They demonstrate this explaining their 'mercy cross' placing a flower on the display when they carry out an act of mercy.
- Pupils take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which engage them in their faith communities. The children talk enthusiastically about altar serving, joining the choir and organising charity events in their own time.
- The quality of provision for Catholic life is outstanding. The headteacher supported by the parish priest, governors and staff see Catholic life as fundamental in developing the school. There is a deep commitment to staff development and training ensuring the Catholic life of the school is continually developing and improving.
- All stakeholders, including the pupils, understand what makes a Catholic school unique and have a drive to ensure St Mary's is providing the best it possibly can.
- The school rightly puts the gospel values at the heart of everything it does.
- The children's behaviour at all times is excellent. They understand why they need to behave in certain ways and the effect their behaviour has on the school and wider community. Older children, through careful nurturing, take on responsibility for younger children and role model expectations.
- The children respond to and are actively involved in collective worship. They are reverent and respectful, are keen to participate in all aspects of worship, and talk about it positively.
- All children can articulate prayers they know, which are age appropriate, and they know the different times of year these are used. Children can also write their own prayers, knowing there are different types.
- Older children are given opportunities to organise and lead worship including reading at Mass both at school Mass and weekend Masses. Children are engaged with prayer and are beginning to plan their own worship. Older children often lead whole school worship; this is something that could be developed throughout the school. Staff are highly skilled in planning worship and this is reflected in how children engage, lead and understand worship.

- Both the headteacher and parish priest lead effective worship which allows the children full participation whilst explaining or teaching.
- Prayer focuses in each classroom are of high quality and reflect the liturgical season. All children, even the very youngest, spoke about the changes of colour and focuses during the year.
- Prayers are used effectively across the school. These are appropriate to the age of the children and a variety of styles. The youngest children know why people pray and how, while older children can give examples of types of prayers such as thanksgiving and adoration.

## **Leadership**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leaders promote the Catholic life of the school in the local community and within the school very effectively. The headteacher and governors share a strong commitment to the Catholicity of the school.
- Governors play a key role in the success of the school by holding the staff to account whilst also playing a supportive role to them. They evaluate and monitor the action plan well and ensure developments happen.
- The link governor talks clearly about how the Catholic life action plan is developed and monitored; this is rooted in evidence.
- The school has a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating Catholic life which involves systematic processes which focus on the benefits to all pupils. There is a clear cycle of monitoring involving plan, do, assess, review.
- The headteacher produces clear information for governors who challenge and support in order to drive improvements. Governors are very aware of their responsibilities for both Catholic life and RE and play a full part in shaping the direction of St Mary's as a Catholic school.
- Catholic worship is rigorously monitored by the headteacher; both in respect of frequency and quality. She ably helps and develops collective worship across the school. She acts as an excellent role model and has helped to develop staff. She has led change successfully across the school.
- Monitoring is both formal and informal and is having a positive influence across the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- The school rightly judges all aspects of its religious education to be outstanding. This is both accurate and reliable because it is derived from a programme of self-evaluation and review, encompassing pupil attainment and progress, teaching and learning, and curriculum provision.
- The RE leader monitors the provision of religious education regularly and rigorously. It encompasses work scrutiny, planning trawls, pupil voice, lesson observations and data analysis.

- Monitoring has led to significant improvements in outcomes for all groups of children while development points given to staff are then followed up by the RE subject leader and lead to staff training. This, in turn, has increased confidence in teaching the RE scheme of work and linking together different concepts.
- Monitoring in RE is linked to whole school improvement priorities. The school development plan identifies priorities based on monitoring evidence which is discussed and shared by all staff and governors.
- Children's achievements in RE are outstanding. Children leave St Mary's at higher level than diocesan expectations.
- Their written work is of the same standard as their literacy work which, in the light of national figures at the end of Key Stage 2, is of very high standard for all pupils.
- The school uses the diocesan curriculum strategy to good effect which ensures all children regardless of their starting points achieve very well.
- Baseline assessments indicate children have little RE knowledge when entering the school.
- The school thoroughly analyses data, identifying trends over time. Although this can be difficult due to small cohorts. The analysis informs monitoring and improvements can be seen because of this.
- The school has clear annotated examples of children's work at various levels which staff can refer to. This ensures staff are assessing and planning work which ensuring children are progressing well.
- The teaching across the school is at least very good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge which enables them and therefore the children, to see and make links across the curriculum. For example in upper Key Stage 2 the teacher made links between gifts of the Holy Spirit and how a priest uses these gifts in his daily life.
- Teaching encourages the children to become inquisitive and children reflect on their own work.
- A range of teaching styles and activities sustain pupil concentration and motivation. They clearly enjoy their RE lessons. Resources are used effectively during lessons, although in some cases there could be more modelling to ensure lower ability children are encouraged to work independently.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are high and pupils rise to the challenge.
- Children talk about the 'purple pen of progress' and this can be seen in children's work.
- Teachers are skilled in questioning the children and often allow children to investigate deeper and answer one another's questions. Most questions asked needed a justification and deeper thinking.
- The quality of children's RE work is excellent.
- Children are religiously literate, and they have knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age. This is clearly shown in the progress of the children's bible skills across Key Stage 2. They are able to answer and ask questions in depth and communicate their knowledge in many different ways.
- Pupils are able to analyse religious stories and characters and are beginning to apply them to their own lives. Children were clearly making links between the disciples spreading the good news and what they should do today to do the same.

## **SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is excellent.
- The school's aims explicitly state that it sees its work as rooted in learning about Christ.
- The school has a strong family atmosphere, which is greatly valued by families, pupils and governors. All of whom experience and contribute to it.
- Children are encouraged to think and wonder about things in the world around them.
- The school is a safe and trusting environment where there is mutual respect. Good behaviour is recognised and reward in celebration assembly weekly.
- The children's behaviour is excellent at all times where they clearly take responsibility for their actions.
- Pupils have a growing understanding of vocation both in their own lives and the lives of people they know. They can also explain the vocation of their chosen class saint. They choose to use their gifts and talents to serve others.
- During the Year of Mercy the children have chosen a class saint and can explain their saint's vocation.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for the development of Catholic Christian values.
- All staff role model Catholic Christian values and expect children to show these values in their lives.
- Children are given opportunities to show these values in collective worship, RE lessons and around school generally.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide opportunities for younger children to plan and lead worship across the school.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation processes which include all staff sharing good practise and all staff collectively developing the Catholic life and RE within the school.
- Develop 'Faith Fridays' to include visitors and visits to places of importance to both Catholic heritage and other religions.