



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAMINGTON SPA

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Inspection dates 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Reporting Inspector Teresa Quick

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11years
Number on roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Ann Allison
School address	Cashmore Avenue Leamington Spa CV31 3EU
Telephone number	01926 425958
E-mail address	admin3543@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	December 2009
DFE School number	937/3543
Unique Reference Number	125715

**Headteacher** Mrs Karen Ferguson

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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. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, the link governor for RE, staff and parish priest. She attended Mass, the Stations of the Cross, a Church visit and a hymn practice 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 the leadership of religious education which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

## **Information about the school**

St Patrick's is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school with a nursery. It is one of 3 schools serving the parish of St Peter the Apostle in Leamington Spa. It serves an area of mixed housing with social and low cost private housing. Within the area there is some social deprivation. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 35%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 20%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 48% which is well above average. The number of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above average. Pupils enter school with low starting points

## **Main Finding**

In its self evaluation the school judges itself to be a good school moving to an outstanding Catholic school. They believe that they send pupils out with strong foundations in the Catholic faith, fully prepared to take the next steps in their journey as followers of Christ and the Catholic Church of the future. The senior leadership and governors have a shared vision for the school. They believe that the human and the divine are inseparable and that RE is the education of the whole person and not just another curriculum area. The gospel values permeate all aspects of life at St Patrick's. All staff and governors contribute to the religious character and mission of the school. The Catholic ethos is palpable. The inspection revealed that the school has taken action and put in place all the recommendations made at the time of the last inspection. The school has good links with the parish and the local community and works well with the other Catholic schools in the parish.

## **School self evaluation**

The school has a clear view of its strengths and the areas that need further improvement. This is based on very good systems of monitoring and evaluation that are carried out within the school and in conjunction with the governing body. The clear vision and high expectations of the headteacher and deputy head / subject leader and the support they give to staff produces very good outcomes from the monitoring of lessons, pupils' work and the general Catholic life of the school. Their dedication and support for all staff is an important feature that has helped raise standards both in the Catholic life of the school and in the teaching and learning in RE. Governors provide good support to the school led by the knowledgeable chair of governors. The link governor for RE supports for the monitoring process.

The school led by the headteacher has produced a detailed thoughtful evaluation. It recognises that the pupils' attainment in RE is good but the quality of pupils' learning and progress is outstanding. This is also the case with pupils with special needs and disabilities (SEND) who are given the support they need. There have been a number of recent changes in teaching staff and now the staff have blended into a team with high expectations of the pupils. Much in-service training and modelling of lessons has been given by the subject leader. The school's excellent monitoring and assessment has identified where support should be targeted. Pupils' progress is now showing greater continuity due to the quality of teaching which is all good or better. The outcomes of the monitoring are carefully recorded providing staff with useful information. This adds to what they learn through their moderation processes and the portfolios of evidence collected. The subject leader gathers and records information about planning, the quality of teaching and learning and pupil progress. Good provision for the monitoring and evaluation of RE has led to planning that implements improvement for pupils. The subject leader works closely with the headteacher to improve learning in RE and the Catholic life of the school. They are excellent role models for the rest of the staff. The headteacher joined the inspector in all the lesson observations and showed her ability to judge effectively. The headteacher and the subject leader have a good overview of the progress being made by the pupils and the quality of educational provision they are enjoying. They know the pupils well. The headteacher has observed the teaching and learning of RE in each class this year and the subject leader has observed lessons and teaches RE throughout the school. This includes an hour a week in each class with a non Catholic teacher. Consequently they can provide staff and governors with an overview of what is needed to make improvements to the provision for the pupils. The RE curriculum contributes to the pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development which they judge as outstanding. Pupils are inspired to provide for those less fortunate than themselves, in particular for the CAFOD collection and the school they support in Bo in Sierra Leone.

The school judges its Catholic life to be good. The last inspection considered that the school would benefit from a collegiate approach to the Catholic life of the school. Teachers and teaching assistants led by the senior management team now work together as a close team. This has produced outstanding results. Aspects of Catholic life are carefully monitored. Pupils benefit from a wide range and style of collective worship. They are now developing the ability to plan their own collective worship. They willingly take part in the prayer life of the school and were active in their response to the whole school Mass. They showed that they were used to prayer circles with meditative prayer, open prayer and the use of the traditional prayers of the church. Pupil's responses to the Catholic life of the school they now judge to be very good. They were quiet and contemplative in a beautiful presentation of The Way of the Cross. Year 6 clearly benefit from their retreat time at Alton Castle. The leadership closely monitors the Catholic life and seek ways to improve provision.

In response to the recommendations at the time of the previous inspection action has been taken on all points raised. The mission statement has been reviewed and revised by all stakeholders and now encompasses the Catholic ethos of the school and the community it serves. Planning has been revised and personalised for St Patrick's ensuring continuity and progression and full coverage of the units of study ensure a good curriculum. There is now an effective system of moderating pupils' work through the effective use of attainment levels. The family life and sex education policy has been revised.

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

This is a Catholic school where the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the deputy head has impacted on the standards and progress in RE and the pupils' attainment. Every member of the school community is valued and respected. There is a greater continuity of quality of teaching which is now good or better. Pupils enter school with low starting points. During the last school year there was 31% mobility among the pupils. Approximately a fifth of the pupils come from ethnic minority groups. Just over a third of the school are baptised Catholics but progress for all groups of pupils are outstanding given their low starting points. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special needs and disabilities (SEND) also learn well. Progress and learning in RE matches the expectations in English. In Year 2 pupils have benefited from some outstanding teaching so most pupils are at least working in line with and some working above expectations. They enjoy their RE lessons. They have a good knowledge for their age and ability of the Old and New Testaments. They can talk well about various miracles and parables and know a good selection of the prayers of the Church. The enjoyment of singing has been a factor in their learning in RE and their resulting attainment. Year 6 are generally working in line with diocesan expectations. They have absorbed the Catholic life of the school well. They are now benefitting from teaching which is of a consistently high quality and, consequently, are thoroughly enjoying their learning. They have a significant knowledge and understanding of the Catholic religion including the sacraments and the liturgical year. Pupils with SEND receive very good support from classroom assistants and their teachers so they make progress in line with their peers. The response of the pupils in lessons is excellent. They enjoy what they were doing. The ethos of the school and the teaching of RE supports the excellent spiritual, moral and vocational development.

Overall, relationships throughout the school community are outstanding. Pupils see teachers and teaching assistants working very well together. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for other pupils, and to the adults with whom they come in contact. Pupils are polite and welcoming. The approach to the prayer life of the school is outstanding. Pupils prayed devoutly at Mass, in the prayer services and in the liturgies observed. A variety of liturgies take place at different times of the year. As pupils get more mature they take a greater part in the planning of the prayer services and liturgies. Each classroom has a prayer table. Pupils choose what goes on the prayer table. Sometimes this will include their worry boxes. There are statues and crucifixes and numerous eye-catching displays of a religious nature around the school. Displays include those from the Bible while others keep pupils up to date about what is happening in the Church to-day. The leaders monitor the outcomes of the Catholic life. They are constantly striving to improve the provision for the Catholic life of the pupils. Consideration is being given to starting the preparation for First Communion and Reconciliation in Year 2 and Confirmation in Year 5 and altering the time of the Alton Castle visit to Year 5.

Provision is good and often outstanding. The quality of teaching is good with some that is outstanding practice. There have been a number of new teaching appointments in the school. Pupils are now able to make more consistent progress. All classes are taught for at least an hour of RE time by a Catholic teacher. The curriculum is based on the diocesan strategy but is adapted to meet the needs of the school. Areas of the SEAL programme learning about other faiths and family life and sex education are all included in the school's planning. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and the good use of ICT. I-Pads were used successfully when a class visited the church to look at the Stations of the Cross with the priest. Each lesson has a clear learning objective. In lessons and on visits

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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.

planning meets the needs of the differing abilities within the group. Prayer is an integral part of the lessons. Pupils show a great maturity to their approach to prayer and the older pupils enjoy meditative prayer.

Parents have written how pleased they are that their children are so enjoying learning about their faith. Parents' knowledge of the teaching and learning in RE comes from what their children tell them and the evidence on parents' evenings. The school plans to enhance parental involvement in the spiritual life of the school through "Inspire Workshops". There are some opportunities when the school is able to link with the parish. The school wishes to strengthen their links with the parish further but a limiting factor is the school is situated some distance from the Church. Pupils' books show a variety of methods of recording and often the work is matched to ability or support given to enable the pupils to achieve the learning objective. Where there are two teachers teaching RE in a class the written work is either in the back or front of the book. Books are marked with positive helpful comments following the school's "Feedback marking policy".

### **Recommendations**

The school will continue to improve if:

- they further develop the knowledge of the teaching staff through high quality CPD to keep the Catholic life at the centre of all they do
- Enhance parental involvement in the spiritual life of the school through Inspire workshops.
- Consider the different ways to enable the school in the future to recruit Catholic teachers.



Diocesan Education Service,  
Don Bosco House,  
Coventry Road,  
Coleshill,  
B46 3EA

April 2013

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, March 2013**

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 is now an outstanding Catholic school. Your children benefit from the vision and drive of the headteacher and her deputy for the Catholic life and religious education. They evaluate the Catholic life of the school and religious education carefully. They now lead a team of teachers and teaching assistants who work with enthusiasm to provide the best Catholic education. Teaching of RE is good and often outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning in RE, the liturgies with the music, and their visits, and as a result they learn well. There is an excellent Catholic ethos where every member of the school community is valued and respected. Pupils take an active part in the prayer life of the school. Governors, teachers and pupils are all rightly proud of how well the pupils are achieving in this Catholic school. Teachers encourage pupils to behave well in class and around the school. Pupils are polite and welcoming. Teachers regularly monitor and assess your child's learning and the Catholic life of the school to ensure that your child receives the best possible Catholic education.

I have recommended that the school should further develop the religious knowledge of the teaching staff through high quality continuing professional development to keep the Catholic life at the centre of all they do. They should also aim to enhance parental involvement in the spiritual life of the school through Inspire workshops. Finally they should consider different ways to enable the school in the future to recruit Catholic teachers.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time being able to see your children at work, play and prayer. It was a privilege and pleasure to inspect your school. The children and staff made me feel most welcome. The children are proud of their school. They are a credit to the school, to their families and those who care for them

Yours sincerely

Teresa Quick  
Diocesan Inspector