



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Monitoring Visit

### ST CATHERINE OF SIENA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank, Birmingham, B15 2AY

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Inspection dates  
Reporting Inspector

1<sup>st</sup> June 2015  
Mr Joseph Skivington

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              | 213                         |
| Appropriate authority       | The Governing Body          |
| Chair of Academy Committee  | Mrs Sam Buckby              |
| Telephone number            | 0121 692 1051               |
| E-mail address              | enquiry@scathrc.bham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | July 2010                   |
| DFE School Number           | 330/3331                    |
| Unique Reference Number     | 103433                      |

**Headteacher** **Mr Liam Fadden**

Previous inspection: 1

This inspection: 1

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



### **Information about this inspection**

- 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 5 part RE lessons some jointly with SLT.
- 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 staff and with the parish priest and the chair of governors. He observed prayer life in three class based worship, group prayers, 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.

### **Information about the school**

- St Catherine's is a single form entry primary school in the inner city of Birmingham, with 239 on roll, including the Nursery class. Those who are Catholic make up 58%, and the rest are from a variety of faith backgrounds.
- A very high proportion of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- The governing body is currently being reconstituted for September 2015.
- Attainment on entry indicated by RE baseline assessment is low.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Build in discrete time for the pupils to reflect on and respond to the verbal and written formative comments of their teacher
- Plan a more formal review of the school's mission statement so that the whole school community can express and share their understanding of what it means to them.

## Inspection judgements

### Catholic Life

- Since the last inspection the school has addressed the issue of the strategic role of the governing body successfully. There are now more robust and searching processes for monitoring and evaluating RE and Catholic life, with the result the school continues to sustain its outstanding provision and outcomes.
- The school uses a range of effective measures, particularly reflective enquiry into the impact of its good provision to promote its Catholic ethos, and its inclusive approach to collective worship. For instance, the continuous monitoring of the impact of classroom prayer areas and displays around the school.
- The establishment of frequent opportunities for students and parents to provide written and verbal feedback enables the senior leaders to assess the impact of its practice and provision and has led to continual improvement in the quality of assemblies and liturgies. The parent questionnaire conducted in the Autumn Term 2015 was an effective exercise leading to action for improvement.
- While it is very much on display around the school and known in simple terms to the pupils, the school has not had for some time a more formal review of its Mission statement, to enable staff, parents and pupils to re interpret and reflect what it means for them as a living faith community.

### Involvement of pupils, staff, and parents in self evaluation

- The school is developing fruitful processes whereby pupils contribute well to evaluation through surveys, questionnaires, school council and especially the recently set up *faith council*, made up of older pupils who are assigned to year groups and help the children to prepare and present their class assemblies.
- In conversation pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities to contribute more to the spiritual and prayer life of the school and to take more ownership of it. Although not an area picked out in the previous report to be addressed, it was within the text. The school has responded very effectively and successfully.
- Pupils are involved in the reviews and evaluations of their liturgies and assemblies, and this encourages them to be reflective but also more confident in actively participating and contributing.
- Staff are an integral part of this review process, particularly the priest/chaplain, who plays an effective part in the ongoing evaluation of Catholic ethos and provision for spiritual development.
- Form tutors are likewise held responsible for the quality and impact of class collective worship.
- The school includes questions about Catholic life and RE in its regular surveys of parent view. The majority of parents said they are kept well informed about how their children are progressing in RE (Parent View, autumn 2014), and appreciate the strong pastoral care in the school.

### Whole school curriculum evaluation

- The RE curriculum is broad, inclusive, balanced and occupies 10% of the timetable. Students are, more than most, aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures in Britain because they study together, and can appreciate the many similarities - but also differences - between their traditions. The Inter Faith Week makes a significant impact in terms of knowledge of other's beliefs and practices.

- Everyone, regardless of their faith background, is affirmed and respected, and readily welcomed to participate in every aspect, including the Mass, which is at the centre of all key celebrations during the year where all, regardless of background, readily volunteer to play a part.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral and vocational development of students has been audited across all areas of school life and the impact of this is constantly reviewed. There is appropriate provision for sex and relationship education through the All that I Am programme.
- The pupils have opportunity to go on retreat for example at Alton Castle, and the Faith Council had a very fruitful day at St Mary's, returning with lots of ideas and enthusiasm.
- Students have many opportunities to develop their skills and talents through assemblies and liturgies, using art, drama, and music. The colourful displays around the school reflect the liturgical year: they are both instructive and uplifting.

### **Governors**

- Governors are committed to the school and its Catholicity because they are well informed, and are therefore in a strong position to recognise the quality of its ethos.
- The governors are a well qualified and experienced group of supportive and challenging critical friends of the school. The body is being re-constituted in time for the new term in September with further valuable expertise.
- Through robust and reliable processes governors hold senior leaders to account for sustaining and constantly improving the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Governors are frequent visitors to the school and know staff and pupils well. This enables them to come to reliable conclusions about progress and ethos as evident in the governor's minutes.

### **Collective Worship**

- Monitoring of collective worship has a clear impact on the quality of liturgies and assemblies because, through frequent reviews, there are now shared expectations of what constitutes good practice.
- Students of all faiths and none are willing and reverent participants in collective worship, and learn much from each other's traditions. As a result prayer develops through the school and plays a deepening significance in their day to day lives.
- The Faith Council, formed in September 2015, has encouraged the involvement of more students in the planning of the liturgies. The evidence in the quality of the personal prayers composed by the children points to the development of a deepening relationship with God.
- Students are reverent and focussed in Mass, and ever willing to play a part and share around the Eucharistic table.

### **Improvement planning**

- Improvement planning is marked by clear priorities, success criteria, and review intervals. In-service provision and support material are provided for staff. The subject leader will feed back issues to the RE governor each term and the governing body are provided with an over view of progress against the school improvement targets.

- Targets are appropriate to the stage at which the school finds itself, because of the knowledge and expertise of the governors but also the rigorous processes for self evaluation which feed directly into the improvement plan.
- This is a school that knows itself well and what it needs to do to sustain its outstanding provision and practice.

### Religious Education

- Self evaluation is rooted in close evaluation of performance in RE, which show that the processes for review are effective
- Learning walks and book trawls at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are key to correcting any inconsistency in teaching or assessment. The marking of pupils' work is an effective means of showing pupils how to improve with appropriate challenge and expectation. The pupils' response to this fruitful formative advice, and its impact on progress, would be further enhanced with time set aside for them to reflect on and respond at some length.
- There is effective support for newly appointed teachers and those who do not have a background in the Catholic Faith.
- Attainment and progress at both key stages are outstanding. Pupils' baseline assessments indicate low prior knowledge but they swiftly catch up through Key Stage 1, and by the end of Key Stage 2 the quality of work in terms of both quantity and quality is very impressive – the majority achieving above expected progress. Disadvantaged and SEN students' progress matches that of the others because of extra support in lessons and tasks which meet their learning needs and match their abilities.
- The majority of lessons observed and books scrutinised showed outstanding learning over time, a tribute to the high quality teaching, which is consistently good and much outstanding.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and engage the pupils in the lessons with interesting variety of activities including open discussion about the topics covered. These become increasingly mature and thoughtful as they move up the school, as every student's opinion is listened to with respect and interest.
- The area for improvement lie in eliciting a measured reflective response so that the teacher can judge more accurately the progress the pupil has made, both in learning about religion but also learning from it. Some marking is not fully effective for this very reason.
- There are also fruitful links with the Sisters of Mercy Convent in Handsworth including an inspiring day visit by the pupil Faith Council.
- Priorities for improving outcomes in RE are appropriate and the resultant outstanding progress is evident in pupils' work.
- The governors are very well informed, are in a position to assess the quality of the RE outcomes, and know how to compare themselves to other diocesan schools.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory and canonical responsibilities thoroughly.