



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate

The Avenue, Kidsgrove, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST7 1AE

Inspection date	18 th & 19 th May 2017
Reporting Inspector	Debbie Huxtable

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	187
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Angela Jones
Telephone number	01782 296736
E-mail address	headteacher@stjohnskidsgrove.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 th & 19 th July 2012
DFE School Number	860/3462
Unique Reference Number	140146

Headteacher	Helen Butters
Previous inspection:	Good
This inspection:	Requires Improvement



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 three RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the principal.
- 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 two governors, the principal who is currently the RE subject leader, and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a Key Stage 1 Mass, a Key Stage 2 assembly, examples of 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' attainment and progress, RAISE online and the development plan.

Information about the school

- St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy is a smaller than average one form entry primary school with a split site. It is situated within the parish of St John the Evangelist in the centre of Kidsgrove.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 37%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are both well below the national average.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is slightly below the national average.
- The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) is well below the national average but those with a statement or an Education, Health and Care Plan is slightly above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average.
- The school is part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate. This multi-academy-company (MAC) comprises the local secondary school, St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, and seven other Catholic primary schools in the Stoke-on-Trent area of the diocese.
- The school occupies a split site. The Key Stage 1 building is situated next to the parish church in the town centre while the Key Stage 2 building is situated on the outskirts of the town. This limits opportunities for whole school activities and creates challenges for staff, including the principal, who have to commute from one site to the other site on a daily basis.
- Staffing is stable and the principal has taken over leadership of Catholic life and RE since the last inspection.

Main Findings

- St John the Evangelist Academy is a welcoming, friendly school where governors, staff and children are proud of the strong community spirit that is maintained despite difficulties experienced through a split site and the deteriorating conditions of the premises.
- Pupils are well behaved around the school and in lessons, they appreciate and value their school and all that it has to offer them.
- Self-evaluation does not present an accurate analysis of the impact of the school's provision for Catholic life because it is not securely based upon evidence that is gathered through a consistent, informative system that is contributed to by all stakeholders.
- Pupils have some positive experiences of prayer and liturgies. However, the provision of collective worship overall needs to be more consistent. The school has identified accurately that pupils' knowledge and use of traditional prayers requires development.
- Standards of teaching and learning in RE, and consequently outcomes for pupils, vary across the school. Teacher expectations about the presentation of work and the productivity of pupils is inconsistent. Staff do not always provide effective marking or feedback for pupils in order to move their learning on or to provide challenge and deeper understanding.
- Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed, but some are still continuing to be developed.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- The provision and outcomes for pupils in respect of Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development of the school requires improvement to be good.
- The school has a good community spirit where staff are fully committed to providing support and help for children and families who need extra consideration, whether within the school or through the involvement of other agencies.
- Pastoral care is important to all members of the school community and extra support and provision is often put into place for those more vulnerable pupils. This was reflected in discussions with pupils who expressed that they were happy at the school and felt safe and well cared for.
- Pupils respect each other and this is evidenced through their interactions around the school and the recently reviewed behaviour policy.
- Members of the parish and the academy committee are highly committed and proud of the school, they organise a gardening club which provides opportunities for children to pray in outdoor areas. Flowers from the garden are sometimes sold to parishioners after Mass to raise funds. This contributes to the Catholic life of the school and helps develop pupils' understanding of the wonder and awe of creation.
- As a result of monitoring, the school has accurately identified vocations as an area for development. Pupils need to express what vocation means to them personally and to understand that as Christians we are called to serve.

- Staff are committed to participating and supporting the life of the parish through the well-developed sacramental programme. This means there is a clear opportunity, through effective action planning, to further develop the relationship between the parish and the school community.
- Pupils are keen to participate in school activities and they willingly take on responsibilities such as serving on the altar and fund raising for a variety of charities. During discussions with pupils they were able to express ways in which the school works to develop its Catholic life but could not fully articulate the relationship between their actions and the Catholic life and mission of the Church.
- Artefacts, statues and crucifixes, which support the Catholic environment, are evident around the school and in classrooms. The coloured cloths on prayer areas are changed regularly. As a result, pupils are able to recognise and understand the liturgical seasons of the Church.
- Although the school has had limited engagement with diocesan support for the development of collective worship, the parish priest has provided effective training for staff. The principal believes this has had a significant impact. There are plans for this to be repeated on a termly basis and it is hoped this will further develop the skills and knowledge of all staff.
- The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is at the heart of the community and has a high profile both within the school and the parish. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to participate in the celebration of Mass and are reverent and respectful. They respond with enthusiasm to the parish priest who both encourages and challenges pupils through his interactive homilies.
- Pupils write meaningful prayers for displays and there are also examples within their RE books. Some pupils also compose prayers for liturgies including the celebration of Mass. However, there is a lack of consistency across classes in the frequency and quality of prayer and collective worship. There are some examples of good practice but some collective worship focuses on questioning pupils' knowledge rather than providing opportunities to be reflective and develop spiritual understanding.
- The school has correctly identified that pupils' knowledge of traditional prayers needs developing. Collective worship would also benefit from a variety of prayer styles and the increased use of sacred music.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship requires improvement to be good.
- Leaders are securely committed to the Catholic mission of the school.
- There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision and outcomes for pupils. However, these systems are not comprehensive and so it is difficult to form an accurate view of the quality and impact of Catholic life and collective worship.
- The principal completes an audit of Catholic ethos termly and this is reported to the school committee and directors in the principal's report. However, there is little contribution to this audit from staff, pupils or governors.

- The school development plan includes a section on aims for Catholic life, collective worship and RE. Areas for improvement have been identified but progress towards the planned actions and termly milestones, has been slow; the expected impact and outcomes have not been achieved during the first two terms of this school year.
- The parish priest and governors are very dedicated to the school and make a significant contribution to it. They lead on several aspects of Catholic life and collective worship in school and make links with the parish community.
- The school is committed to Catholic partnerships and attends year group Masses with other schools from the collegiate including the secondary school. Attendance at these Masses further demonstrate how important the celebration of the Eucharist is to the school and pupils.
- Sacramental preparation is well planned and organised. It is a good example of a partnership that focuses on pupils and their families. It has a high profile within the school and the parish. Pupils respond positively to this preparation and enjoy taking part in the activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The leadership, provision and outcomes for pupils in RE requires improvement to be good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by the principal through general learning walks and work scrutiny. Governors have also taken part in learning walks. A summary document is produced by the headteacher but there is no evidence that the areas for development are acted upon to ensure that monitoring is having an impact on outcomes for pupils. There is also no evidence that the findings are fed back to individual members of staff to further develop teaching and learning.
- Governors visit school and provide informal feedback to the governing body. However, data on pupil attainment and progress in RE is not currently shared and therefore governors lack the opportunities to question and challenge the teaching and learning of RE.
- Processes for assessment of attainment and data collection are in place; staff complete end of unit assessments providing evidence for judgements on pupils' learning.
- By the end of Year 6 many pupils achieve broadly in line with diocesan expectations. However, progress and attainment in lower years and across key stages is inconsistent, particularly the progress of some vulnerable groups.
- Data collected by staff shows a lack of progress in some year groups. The analysis of vulnerable groups, particularly pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and/or Pupil Premium, also shows many pupils make limited or no progress.
- Staff have taken part in moderation and assessing pieces of work, for the focus child in each class, to ensure judgements across the school are consistent. Currently these judgements are made by reviewing one piece of work per child, this judgement now needs to be informed by a larger evidence base. Opportunities for this moderation to extend beyond school have begun and the principal has further plans to develop this area in the future.

- Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and some are able to relate previous learning to new learning. Observations and interviews show they are keen to do well and are able to work collaboratively in groups or independently. But they are still developing their understanding of how their learning can be applied to their daily lives.
- Some lessons or parts of lessons observed showed a lack of pace and this was also reflected in the pupils' books. The expectations of some staff, in regards to the quality of the presentation of pupils' work and the appropriate amount of work that pupils produce, is not consistently high enough.
- Marking and feedback over time and across the school shows inconsistency; pupils are not given enough opportunities to further develop their thinking nor do they know how to improve their work and move their learning on. In several classes comments focus on English skills with teachers often referring to punctuation or presentation of work instead of the pupils' learning in relation to religious education.
- Many pupils are familiar with key bible stories. Some are able to use the Bible with confidence and use references with accuracy. This now needs to be embedded across the school.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows written work is varied and activities are appropriate to the expected learning outcome. However, at present there are too few opportunities for pupils to produce thoughtful pieces of writing appropriate to their abilities.
- Support staff are skilled and well deployed to support teachers and pupils. They are dedicated and demonstrate good subject knowledge and questioning skills.
- The curriculum, based on the Diocesan scheme of *Learning and Growing as People of God*, effectively promotes pupils' learning about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church. However, it would benefit from some diversity to develop further pupils' knowledge of the saints and awareness about other faiths and beliefs.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Plan and implement systems and processes that enable accurate monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school.
- Develop a whole school policy and plan for prayer and collective worship that promotes the spiritual development of pupils, taking into account their age and aptitudes.
- Review processes for reporting to governors; include information about attainment and progress of pupils so that governors can fulfil their role to challenge and hold the school to account for improvement in RE.
- Ensure consistency in marking and feedback across all classes so that pupils know how well they are doing and are provided with clear steps for improvement.