



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Avenue Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6UZ

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Inspection date	6 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
Reporting Inspector	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	4-11 years
Number on roll	202
Appropriate authority	Archdiocese of Birmingham
Chair of Governors	Mrs Marion Whelbourn
Telephone number	01789 204517
E-mail address	head3506@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	July 2011
DFE School Number	937-3506
Unique Reference Number	125709

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Jane McNally</b>
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Previous inspection:	2
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This inspection:	2
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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 7 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with two separate groups of pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with governors, parish priest, the headteacher, and the subject leader.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, prayer time in the reception class, 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, and teachers' planning.

## **Information about the school**

- St Gregory's is a one form entry primary school with 202 pupils on roll serving the parish of St Gregory the Great and Our Lady of Peace.
- Pupils are predominantly White British with a small percentage from mixed ethnic backgrounds.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 98%.
- There are below average numbers of SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

## **Main Findings**

- Catholic life and religious education at St Gregory's are good and the school judges itself to be so. The headteacher has very effectively communicated an inspiring vision, setting the school securely on the road to becoming an outstanding school in those core areas of its work.
- There is a vibrant Catholic ethos, which benefits the pupils enormously and to which they contribute by their outstanding behaviour and growing involvement.
- The pupils' response to collective worship is very positive. They participate reverently and are developing the skills of planning and presenting their own acts of collective worship with growing confidence.
- The quality of teaching in RE is good overall, with some outstanding practice, and this results in good or better learning outcomes, and good progress over time.
- The school's leadership is good, because it has robust processes of self evaluation, clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses, and plans and acts very effectively to make constant improvements.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The pupils benefit significantly from the Catholic life of the school and participate fully regardless of faith background or none. This is evident in their outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to learning, their caring behaviour towards each other, and their willingness to be involved in specifically Catholic aspects of school life. For instance, they have already proof read the new mission statement and suggested more pupil friendly wording and are invited to offer their interpretation of what it means for them. They also carried out 'brain builder' tasks about their new house saints and their virtues.
- Their gospel value books show ample evidence of the values they have internalised, such as truth and honesty and right moral choices. In conversation they are able to articulate what it means to be in a Catholic school, and a constant question in their minds is 'how can we be like Jesus?'
- They have regular opportunities to feedback on what they think about the quality of the Catholic ethos through interviews and the school council. As a result the school leadership is able to react, and plan, with the pupils, measurable steps which lead to improvement.
- The pupils organise their own charity fundraising efforts, demonstrating compassion for others in need, both locally and globally, such as the operation Christmas Child, or singing in the local residential homes for the elderly. The older children become real animators in fostering, among their peers, a lively sense of vocation and service.
- The quality of the provision for Catholic life is good. The whole environment of the school reflects its Catholic mission and ethos. It is an open and fully inclusive community where all children are invited to reflect on and live out the values embedded in the ethos of the school.
- The pupils, through the school council and pupil voice, are constantly invited to interpret and share with others what the Catholic life of the school means for them.
- The sacramental preparation programme for First Holy Communion is jointly planned and run by the parish and school. The parish priest has the bishop's permission to postpone the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation during the secondary phase of education.

### Collective Worship

- The pupils respond with attentiveness and reverence during prayers and acts of worship, encouraged in no small way by the role modelling of the older pupils and the example set by the staff. They behave impeccably and are keen to answer questions during whole school assemblies. Older pupils are able to explain how they are fully involved in the planning, as well as the presentation, of the act of worship, including 'practice runs' in front of their peers.
- The pupils are keen to participate and increasingly plan and lead their own assemblies and liturgies, such as the well planned Year 4 Epiphany celebration. Every presentation is reviewed afterwards and 'even better if' suggestions provide the impulse to improve the impact of subsequent assemblies and liturgies.
- The pupils compose many beautiful prayers which are displayed and used at the class altars, and this is proof evident that they are aware of the different ways of praying and types of prayer. They themselves monitor the quality of the class altars and the younger ones encouraged to explain the significance and symbolism of the religious artefacts.

- The school provides a rich diet of liturgies, worship, and prayer both at school and at home. Collective worship in the classroom is an integral part of the day.
- The children say traditional prayers in relation to the times of the day and the liturgical season. They compose their own prayers, both written and orally, and have many opportunities to lead their class worship. Prayer bags for each class further enhance and encourage prayer at home.
- The Mass is celebrated in the adjacent parish church with different year groups. Special liturgies take place during Advent and Lent, as well as major feasts. Traditional prayers and Catholic practices such as the Rosary services during October and May are enthusiastically attended. All these activities are evaluated and reviewed by staff, including the parish priest, and children.
- Staff are growing more confident in allowing pupils more ownership in initiating worship. There is a successful drive, which is steadily involving more pupils right across the school in planning and presenting collective worship, as well as enhancing the children's skills of reflection through guided meditations.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to go on retreat to Alton Castle, while Year 3 have a Day of Recollection.

### **Leaders and Managers**

- The promotion and nurturing of the Catholic life of the school and the quality of RE is of paramount importance to governors and senior leadership; this is evident in all transcripts and minutes of meetings and the school improvement planning documents.
- There are now securely embedded processes for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life which enable governors and leaders to plan further improvements. Due prominence is given to the nurturing and sustaining of the Catholic ethos of the school, as evident in the minutes of the governors' meetings.
- The feedback from pupils and parents is seen as a key element in the school's own self evaluation of its effectiveness, as well as the regular audits of Catholic life. School leaders and governors audit provision for Catholic life and RE every term. All this is fed into the school improvement plan, which is a working document, reshaped where necessary and reactive to developments through the year.
- The mission of the school is prominently displayed and alluded to frequently, so that it becomes a way of life for the whole school community. The audit of different subjects' contribution to the school's spirituality has been a successful focus. There is a high expectation of staff and pupils to treat one another and conduct themselves according to gospel values and the mission of the school. All staff are required to sign a code of conduct to this end at the beginning of each academic year.
- Prayer areas are monitored together with the pupils. They play a growing role in evaluating the quality of provision and resources, and then initiating changes.
- The headteacher and RE subject leader regularly lead in-service training to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education. The recruitment and induction of new staff places a strong emphasis on the Catholic nature of the school and the support for its ethos. Performance management includes a school ethos and mission target for the RE subject leader and for all staff.

- A fruitful link with St Benedict's High School sees the youth officer working with groups of pupils to develop their faith and spirituality through faith group work.
- The provision for collective worship and the implementation of improvements is well monitored by leaders and managers both for compliance and for impact.
- A strong partnership between leaders, pupils and parents is developing and this encourages the all important feedback which enables leaders to evaluate where the school is and what they need to do to improve even further.
- The audits of spirituality and Catholic life have been particularly fruitful and challenging. There is a sense of growth and initiative in the variety of opportunities for prayer and worship, including the staff's own spirituality and prayer life.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership of RE**

- The structures to monitor and evaluate the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils are in place, through lesson observations and work scrutinies, as well as eliciting the feedback from pupils on the quality of their learning. All this feeds into the learning improvement planning which is reported on termly to the governors on the Catholic ethos committee.
- Effective and close support is given to teachers so that the pupils continue to learn well and make expected progress over time. Inset on planning and teaching strategies through professional development (CPD) have provided valuable and fruitful support. The headteacher and RE leader attend termly diocesan training, such as the role of an RE co-ordinator.
- Assessment and moderation of pupils' progress provide a clear picture of individual achievement over time, and feed into the planning of lesson objectives especially for the disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Feedback is given to every teacher after the end of unit book trawls, and targets for improvement are set including next steps. As a result both provision and outcomes have seen a significant improving trend since the last inspection.
- The governors are proactive in questioning, challenging, and making it their business to be fully aware of the day to day running of the school, with frequent visits and feedback on all aspects of school life. This is very evident in the governors' minutes and reflects their close involvement in and knowledge of the school.

### **Religious Education: outcomes and provision**

- On entry to the school, pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of faith, traditions and prayer life are limited. By the end of Key Stage1 assessment data shows that most of pupils are working at, and some above, average expectations. This represents good progress. Children in vulnerable groups, and SEND children, make similarly good progress through targeted support. This reflects the good and sometimes outstanding teaching at this key stage.
- The end of Key Stage 2 data for 2014-15 showed that there is continuing progress through Key Stage 2. The current level of achievement shows a continuing upward trend. The

gender difference has been analysed in detail and explains the sometime disparity in progress between boys and girls.

- The number of pupils making more than expected progress, especially the more able, would increase further if they were given more challenging learning objectives. As part of its strategy on learning from religion the school has recognised this, especially the need to provide more opportunities and higher expectation of extended, reflective writing tasks. This will also enable teachers to more reliably assess individual levels of attainment and progress.
- Pupils enjoy the RE lessons and have developed independent and peer learning skills which has supported their good achievement over time. They can explain how religious beliefs arise and show a growing understanding of how religious beliefs shape their lives and actions.
- Pupils' feedback on their learning suggests a need for teachers to plan a more creative and imaginative approach to lesson planning which challenges, inspires, and addresses more nearly the learning needs of their pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice, but also occasional inconsistency in the level of teachers' expectations of their pupils. Teachers plan their lessons using a variety of strategies, coupled with secure subject knowledge. The rapport with pupils is strong and this, together with the pupils' very positive behaviour for learning, results in good progress over time.
- There has been significant improvement in terms of recording and reviewing the quality and impact of teaching on better learning and progress over time. This has highlighted some disparity in the level of teachers' challenge and insistence, such as the impact of questioning which does not always elicit real intellectual effort from the pupils, but also the need for more differentiation by task to support the learning of the less able pupils.
- The pupils' written work often consists of short pieces of writing on a variety of topics usually done well. The opportunity for more extended, reflective writing would enable the teachers to evaluate their progress more reliably, especially in coming to a judgement on the breadth and depth of their understanding.
- Units are assessed frequently and increasingly more accurately. The school is taking the opportunity to develop the moderation of assessed levels with other schools in the cluster. This will increase and secure more reliable assessment.
- Dialogue marking is well established, with formative comments by teachers responded to by the pupils. The quality of the pupil responses could be more thoughtful and extended in order to get the maximum impact on learning and progress.

### **The Curriculum in RE**

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets all canonical and statutory requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It contributes significantly to the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development through the topics covered in the syllabus, the opportunities to discuss these in class, to reflect on what it means for their actions and relationships with others, and to take on responsibilities and care for others.
- Pupils have the opportunity to explore other faiths in the study of the major world religions, supplemented by visiting speakers and visits to other places of worship.

- The sex and relationship programme is in place and monitored to ensure it is consistent with the teachings of the Church. At present the governors are awaiting a decision from the CES as to what the content of the syllabus should be in order to comply with statutory requirements but also reflect Catholic teaching and values.

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

- The curriculum is very effective in promoting these aspects of personal development. There are many opportunities to reach out to the local and global community in a spirit of service to others and the opportunity to exercise their feelings of generosity and concern for others.
- A group of pupils join their parents and parishioners in the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes each year and are able to share their experiences with the rest of the school on their return.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very strong and its effects are very evident in the behaviour and attitudes of the children and the whole school community. An audit of spirituality across other subjects has begun to raise teachers' awareness of opportunities to point to links with what pupils are learning in RE.
- The provision for pupils' development of Catholic Christian values is good. The Catholic Pupil Profile scheme was successfully launched at the start of the current school year and is developed effectively through assembly topics, and built into lesson planning.

## **Recommendations**

### **The school should:**

- plan for greater challenge in drawing up learning objectives, particularly for those pupils who are more able;
- develop the existing strategy for learning from religion by including more opportunities for extended reflective writing tasks.