



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Part of the St Teresa of Calcutta Multi Academy Company  
Oakley Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0AX

Inspection dates:  
Lead Inspector:

20-21 January 2020  
Ben McArdle

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#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Outstanding**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Outstanding

Collective Worship:

Outstanding

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*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Good*

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- The mission of the school permeates every aspect of its work. Staff and pupils have established a steadfast culture of respect and love for each other as creations of God, out of which drives their ambition to 'achieve anything'.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their development as citizens of modern Britain because of the exceptional quality of pastoral care provided to them and their families. Such care contributes significantly to the reputation the school has as a lighthouse within the local community.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in Religious Education.
- Strong teaching & learning results in all pupils, regardless of their starting points, attaining highly in GCSE Religious Education.
- A wide range of thoughtfully planned and creative opportunities for prayer is part of the natural rhythm of daily school life; these are highly valued by all members of the school community. Consequently, all pupils demonstrate heartfelt reverence when raising their hearts and minds to God.

## FULL REPORT

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

- Revise the mission statement with a view to making it a more concise expression of the school's ethos.
- Establish consistency in the way teachers of Religious Education apply the department's feedback policy when marking pupils' work.
- Ensure that opportunities for prayer in tutor groups routinely matches the high-quality acts of Collective Worship available elsewhere in school.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	Outstanding

### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

#### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

- Holy Trinity is steeped in the tradition of an inclusive community that is firmly rooted in Gospel values and prayer. There are effective relationships at every level between pupils, staff, governors and parents.
- The school's mission statement is fully understood by all members of the community. Pupils and staff clearly articulate its meaning and are fully committed to living the mission through every aspect of their work. The individual circumstances of some pupils and their families do not deter pupils' willingness to become actively involved in the mission of the school.
- The impact of the mission statement is undeniable: it is the driving force behind every action the school takes. Because of its length, pupils and staff are often unable to remember its wording and mistake the school's summary strapline for the actual mission statement. Leaders should review the text of the mission statement so that it can be called to mind more readily by everyone.
- Pupils are actively involved in evaluating the Catholic Life of the school. Opportunities for feedback are planned and pupils take a lead in improvement planning, which they embrace. For example, following the unfortunate death of one of their peers, pupils designed a memorial garden which was installed in a central location on the school site. This is now a focal point for prayer and reflection. Furthermore, wishing to provide financial support to the village from which their peer originally migrated, pupils established a fundraising connection with them and regularly send money to them. This is typical of the compassion and sincerity with which Holy Trinity pupils act.

- Standards of behaviour, particularly during lessons, are generally very high. As a result, pupils enjoy their education and feel safe. When there are instances of poor behaviour, pupils are placed on appropriate, effective intervention courses which include a targeted focus on forgiveness and reconciliation. As a result, there is a calm, working atmosphere throughout the school.
- Through the school council, pupils are afforded further opportunities to lead aspects of Catholic Life. Members take on significant leadership roles, for example, an elected pupil takes on the role of 'head of charity committee' and their work oversees the nomination and selection of outreach work the school undertakes. Working together with senior leaders, the pupil in this role ensures that all outreach work supports the vision of the Catholic Church. Another pupil acts as 'head of smart and tidy site' to enact the teachings contained in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*; efforts have included reducing the use of single-use plastics in school and having Year 11 pupils plant flowers in the memorial garden.
- Response to the school's chaplaincy provision is good. The number of pupils responding to the invitation to partake voluntarily to its initiatives is healthy and those that do value these opportunities.
- The newly restructured chaplaincy team is having an effective impact on the school. They have provided opportunities for internal retreats, on the themes of 'We are one body' and 'Hopes and fears' which pupils in Key Stage 3 have enjoyed. The school's chaplaincy is seeking to further improve the school's offering of retreat experiences and have re-introduced a residential retreat at The Briars Catholic Youth Retreat Centre in Derbyshire.
- The pastoral care offered by the school is outstanding. All pupils feel valued and understand that the reason they are so valued is that they are made in the image and likeness of God. Barriers to learning are quickly addressed and removed; consequently, pupils know that the staff love them as children of God and cherish the relationships they have with them. Staff are particularly skilled in helping pupils deal with bereavement and pupils speak from their hearts about the help they have received with this.
- High quality pastoral care extends to pupils' families and does all it can to be a lighthouse to the local community. For example, the school offers a foodbank for families experiencing high levels of deprivation; school staff are on hand to read newsletters and other important home-school communications to parents for whom English is not their first language and the school hosts the Ladywood Police & Schools Panel. Because of its tireless efforts, Holy Trinity is a source of inspiration and hope to the community it serves.
- The spiritual, moral and ethical development of pupils is at the forefront of the school's work. A supportive and inclusive pastoral system teaches pupils right and wrong and is built around the values of love, equality and care.
- Developing a cohesive community is a fundamental priority of school leaders. Staff have the flexibility and support to create safe and purposeful spaces that enable pupils to learn best and provide pupils with a plethora of opportunities to engage with the local community. Opportunities include the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, the Next Generation Project and the hosting of an annual party for senior citizens at the school. Pupils engage with the core values that will enable them to fully participate in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.
- A culture of vocation plays a central role in the careers, vocational and aspirational elements of the personal and social development curriculum. Gospel values have a clear role in this area of the school's work; this is particularly being reinforced through the *God Who Speaks* initiative. All subject areas have termly careers weeks, where pupils identify and focus on linked professions and the skills and attitudes needed to become the God-given 'best they can be.' The mantra that 'I am a Holy

Trinity pupil and I can achieve anything' is more than mere words on a page: pupils are equipped with the skills and attitudes required to make this a tangible reality.

- There is on-going reflection on the question 'Who is God calling me to be?' As a result, pupils are acutely aware of their responsibility to discern how to use their God-given talents to serve Him and each other.
- Relationships and sex education is taught securely within the context of the Catholic Church's teachings. The school is making good progress to meeting new statutory guidance, using material from *Made in God's Image* and *Live Life to the Full* as the foundation for its curriculum. Pupils value their learning in this area and are confident that the school's provision is meeting their needs.
- Much progress has been made in improving the physical environment as a witness to the Catholic faith. Prayer boards are in all classrooms that act as a tutor room, featuring prayers written by pupils. A whole school competition saw the installation of window art in the chapel, portraying the recently selected year group saints. Furthermore, the use of the Catholic School Pupil Profile (CSPP) within department areas, through initiatives such as 'word of the week', contributes to ensuring that pupils benefit from a truly meaningful Catholic curriculum.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the School**

- The commitment of leaders to Catholic Life is unwavering. Spearheaded by a faith-filled headteacher, leaders effectively share their vision for the school with all stakeholders, resulting in a school that is unapologetically Catholic.
- The school benefits from a substantial contribution from its priest chaplain. His consistent, much valued support of the headteacher, together with his work with the pupils ensures that Catholic Life remains the core priority of the school. As such, the Catholic Life of the school is continually developing and evolving.
- Monitoring and evaluation are at the core of the school's practices. Leaders actively seek the views of staff, pupils and parents in reviewing the school's achievements. For example, staff feedback following continuous professional development (CPD) has informed leaders' planning of future training sessions.
- Leaders undertake monitoring and evaluation that is both rigorous and accurate. A culture of honest reflection pervades, permeating both formal and informal monitoring. As a result, leaders identify areas for development quickly and implement actions that bring about positive impact.
- The newly formed governing body keep Catholic Life as a priority in their work. They actively seek opportunities to be involved in the monitoring of Catholic Life and have begun to effectively hold the headteacher to account. Governors are engaging with diocesan CPD opportunities to further refine their skillset in this area.
- The Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL) of the multi academy company is heavily involved in quality assuring the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life. By adding this further layer of accountability, governors and senior leaders are rightfully confident in the robustness of their leadership and management.
- Leaders ensure that Catholic Life is the first area addressed in the induction process of new staff. Consequently, staff who are new to the school, including trainees, are clear in their understanding of Catholic Life and are enabled to positively contribute to the school's provision from the moment they join Holy Trinity.
- CPD on Catholic Life is routinely given to staff as part of their annual diet of training. Because long-standing staff are invited to refresh their understanding of Catholic Life by attending the induction training for new staff, all staff retain a clear understanding of the school's expectations.

- Because leaders seek the views of parents regarding the Catholic Life of the school, they engage with the Catholic education of their children and are fully supportive of the school's endeavours.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

<b>The quality of Religious Education</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Outstanding
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Outstanding

### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

#### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- The curriculum is carefully mapped against the Religious Education Curriculum Directory. The Key Stage 3 course has been creatively designed, with much thought given to its intent. Due to the school's considerate approach, the curriculum is well matched to the context from which pupils come when they arrive at Holy Trinity.
- The progress pupils make in each Key Stage is exceptional. Irrespective of their starting points, as a direct result of teaching that is often outstanding, and never less than good, pupils consistently make more progress in Religious Education than any other subject.
- Over the last three years, the progress of all groups of learners has been positive; the progress of the overwhelming majority of groups has been significantly positive. Most recently, this has also included pupils with SEND.
- In both lessons and exercise books, pupils demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically and ethically. Because of teachers' carefully planned and targeted questioning, pupils are constantly challenged to justify their answers with reasoned judgements and make connections between different areas of study.
- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and a deep passion for the subject. They plan a variety of tasks for pupils to learn from. Consequently, pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons, are highly motivated and behave exceptionally well. This contributes significantly to the department's highly successful outcomes.
- The vast majority of pupils enter the school with little or no knowledge about the Catholic faith. Therefore, pupils' attainment in Years 7 & 8 is very low. As a result of tailored teaching and interventions, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly in line with expectations.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved over the last three years, compared against national averages. Historically, attainment has been below diocesan averages, however, most recently there has been an exponential rise in attainment, which is a result of initiatives implemented by the subject leader. Attainment is now significantly above diocesan averages. This improvement happened more quickly than anticipated by the school, and the department must now harness the opportunity to build further on their achievements in order to sustain them.

- Because of the engaging, exciting lessons pupils receive, pupils are inspired to produce work of high quality. There is an emphasis on the accurate use of specialist vocabulary and the use of evidence to support personal opinions, which pupils strive to meet. As a result of these high expectations, coupled with teachers' expert knowledge of the demands of the exam board's specification, pupils are enabled to offer responses to questions which are both comprehensive and insightful.
- The recently overhauled assessment system provides a regular, forensic breakdown of pupils' performance against the different assessment objectives of the subject. Consequently, teachers know their pupils extremely well and plan lessons which are carefully matched against their abilities. Regardless of their ability, all pupils are challenged and stretched in every Religious Education lesson.
- Teachers manage time well and are confident in adapting their teaching from the lesson plan to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, progress is guaranteed in all lessons, and sometimes at a rate more quickly than expected.
- The use of well-selected resources contributes to pupils' enjoyment of Religious Education and thereby their progress. In particular, the use of skilled teaching assistants in the access group contributes significantly to the progress of pupils with SEND.
- The department has recently reviewed its marking policy; pupils now have two exercise books for Religious Education. The way in which pupils receive feedback in their assessment books is consistent across different classes. However, there is considerable variance in the way different teachers feed back on work in pupils' 'draft' books, meaning some pupils receive more regular and detailed feedback on how to improve, compared to others. To this extent, teachers' application of the feedback policy is inconsistent.
- Furthermore, there are varying expectations from teachers regarding pupils' responses to questions posed in written feedback. Therefore, although some pupils are having their misconceptions and omissions highlighted to them, pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to revise their work in the light of feedback; as a result, knowledge and skills are, at times, underdeveloped.
- All teachers of Religious Education regularly celebrate pupils' achievements with behaviour for learning points and stamps, which further motivate pupils to work hard.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Religious Education fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales. Significant curriculum changes have taken place, in liaison with the multi academy company, in order to be compliant.
- Religious Education is comparable to the other subjects, in terms of its status, priority and financing.
- The headteacher, who also teaches some Religious Education to Year 11, takes responsibility for line managing the department. He supports and challenges the subject leader appropriately, ensuring that standards remain high.
- Governors have started to monitor and evaluate Religious Education through analysis of the quality assurance programme that is deeply embedded across the school. Their monitoring is planned appropriately, particularly within the context that the governors are new to their roles. A suitably qualified governor has been appointed to the role of link governor for Religious Education; she is confident in how she will exercise her duty.

- The subject leader for Religious Education has an intricate knowledge of his department. He knows his department's strengths, areas for development and has firm plans on how to address them, which he has done so far with tremendous success.
- The subject leader is well informed of national developments and standards in Religious Education and uses this knowledge to inform his practice. For example, he recognised that the previous assessment system was too conservative and not rigorous enough, resulting in the design and implementation of a new system which has contributed to the recent academic success of the department.
- The subject leader is well supported by various members of the senior leadership team and he has built highly effective working relationships with members of his own department.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

<b>The quality of Collective Worship</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Outstanding

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship** **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the School**

- Collective Worship is one the many outstanding strengths at Holy Trinity. All acts of worship are respectful, inclusive, spiritual and sincere. Pupils display great reverence during worship, which further adds to the spirituality of prayer.
- There is genuine enthusiasm for prayer amongst staff and pupils alike. It is because of this enthusiasm that prayer is cemented at the centre of school life and is appreciated by all.
- Pupils are routinely responsible for preparing and leading acts of worship. The 'prayer board' initiative provided a catalyst for pupil leadership to increase and there is now the expectation that pupils take responsibility for writing their own prayer, which feature on displays around the site and prominently in assemblies.
- Pupils value their responsibility to contribute towards the leadership of the school's prayer life, as such they freely commit to guiding the spiritual development of their peers.
- Pupils enjoy a variety of prayer styles: traditional, contemporary, formulaic & extempore prayers all feature in the natural rhythm of the daily experience of school life. Because of this approach, pupils feel confident to explore different ways of raising their hearts and minds to God.
- Participation in voluntary acts of worship is very good. There are ample opportunities for pupils and staff to pray during their free time, and responses to such invitations are always strong. Voluntary prayer is offered regularly in the morning, before the start of school, and at lunchtime. All stakeholders value these

opportunities and believe they contribute significantly to the dignified climate for learning that the school has established. The quality of the voluntary acts of Collective Worship observed by the inspectors was very impressive.

- Inspectors witnessed two phenomenal voluntary prayer sessions, in which pupils of different faiths came together to pray for a common theme. The act of worship began with a common introduction, featuring contributions from staff and pupils, before members of the congregation began worshipping God in their own ways. Monitoring data made available by the school proved this to be a typical outstanding example of an inclusive community working together. This is where Holy Trinity acts as a bright lighthouse yet again for the general Catholic community, and beyond.
- Opportunities for Collective Worship are planned and systematic. Planning shows a good understanding of the liturgical year, which enables pupils to articulate an accurate knowledge of the major seasons and feasts in the Catholic Church.
- The priest chaplain attends school to celebrate Mass whenever he can. He supports the school in a number of other ways, including attending Parents' Evenings, so that parents have the opportunity to speak with him regarding pupils' spiritual development.
- Staff select age appropriate resources to support Collective Worship. These resources enhance the quality of prayer across the entire curriculum.
- Because prayer is available in the morning before school, and Masses are arranged appropriately, the school fulfils its duty to enable other adults associated with school to pray as part of the Holy Trinity family.

### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship**

- Leaders have a secure knowledge of how to plan and lead prayer. This is, in no small way, because of the role modelling demonstrated by the headteacher, his deputy and the person in charge of Catholic Life (PICCL). The headteacher is an authentic witness as to how to worship God and live by the principles of faith. Staff and pupils alike value his shepherding and cherish the encouragement he gives them.
- Acts of Collective Worship are made accessible to pupils in a contemporary context. For example, the use of modern, uplifting hymns rouses the response of the congregation which, in turn, increases their enjoyment and responses.
- Pupil leadership of Collective Worship is a strength of the school's practice. Leaders encourage pupils to lead prayer in tutor groups, subject lessons and year group assemblies. Consequently, pupils are regularly enabled to increase in confidence and to display courage (a core value of the multi academy company).
- The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is regular and thorough. The findings of leaders are accurate and routinely followed up with relevant actions that impact positively on the community. For example, following feedback from pupils who sometimes miss the start of the school day, senior leaders introduced a second school-wide act of Collective Worship at 12:10 each day, so that they can be confident all pupils experience prayer whilst at school.
- CPD opportunities for staff are mostly effective – they are regular and act as an effective reminder as to the school's expectations. Monitoring takes place against these. The priest chaplain has also undertaken work on fostering a culture of encouragement, which has seen a big emphasis on the formation of staff.
- Most staff are skilled in leading Collective Worship. However, there is a need for further CPD to address the needs of some who either do not understand the

purpose of Collective Worship, or who lack confidence in leading it. The greatest need for this is amongst some form tutors and non-teaching staff.

- The school meets the requirements of the diocesan Archbishop in relation to Collective Worship.

**SCHOOL DETAILS**

Unique reference number	144719
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	649
Appropriate authority	The board of directors
Chair	Frances McGarry
Headteacher	Colin Crehan
Telephone number	0121 772 0184
Website address	<a href="http://www.holytrc.bham.sch.uk">www.holytrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@holytrc.bham.sch.uk">info@holytrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	March 2015

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- Holy Trinity Catholic School is a heavily oversubscribed, smaller than average secondary school close to the centre of Birmingham. It serves the parishes of Holy Family, Small Heath; Our Lady of the Rosary, Saltley & St Vincent's, Vauxhall.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 7%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of SEND pupils is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with EAL is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below average.
- Since the last inspection: the school has converted to become an academy and joined the St Teresa of Calcutta Multi Academy Company; there has been a new headteacher and a new subject leader for Religious Education; a new governing body has been appointed and the number of pupils on roll has increased.

**INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle & Stephen Burns.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across fourteen Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.

- Meetings were held with governors, including the Catholic Life link governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the PICCL, the priest chaplain, the chaplaincy team, the CSEL and vice chair of the board of directors and with various groups of pupils.
- The inspectors attended classroom, year group and voluntary acts of Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the RE action plan, teachers' planning and exercise books. A digital evidence portfolio was also reviewed.