



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Monitoring Visit

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Oakley Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, B10 0AX

Inspection dates	9-10 th March 2015
Reporting Inspector	Mr Joseph Skivington
Assisting Inspector	Mr Robert Hall

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18 years
Number on roll	589
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Ms Margaret Holland
Telephone number	0121 772 0184
E-mail address	enquiry@holytcr.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2012
DFE School Number	330/4664
Unique Reference Number	103538

Headteacher	Mr Aiden Bannon
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Previous inspection:	3
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This inspection:	2
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by 2 Diocesan Inspectors. 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 inspectors observed 8 full/part RE lessons some jointly with SLT.
- In addition the inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with students to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- They held meetings with the parish priest, chaplain, staff, and governor. They observed collective worship – assemblies/tutor group prayers, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour.
- They 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

- Holy Trinity is a smaller than average size Catholic secondary school with 589 students on roll, 8% of whom are baptised Catholics.
- A high proportion are from ethnic minority backgrounds, with 41.8% of Pakistani origin.
- The governors are currently exploring a Multi Academy Company route for the future of the school.
- The headteacher has been in post since September and at present the RE department has an acting head.
- Attainment on entry is below expectation in line with English.

Main Findings

- The quality of self evaluation of Catholic life and collective worship is good
- The quality of self evaluation of RE is good.
- The quality of improvement planning is good.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life

- Since the last inspection the school has addressed the issue of weak self evaluation successfully. There is now a more structured approach to monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life and ethos.
- 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.
- 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, for instance, in the quality of assemblies and liturgies
- The school is developing fruitful processes whereby students contribute well to evaluation through surveys, questionnaires, school council and through the chaplaincy team. Efforts to advance this last aspect vigorously are weakened by the present long term absence of the school's lay chaplain.
- The school has yet to investigate formally students' understanding of its mission, perhaps through a whole school community re visit, and renewed interpretation of what it means in their lives
- Staff are an integral part of this review process, particularly the priest/chaplain, who plays an effective part in the evaluation of Catholic ethos and provision for spiritual development.
- 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 2014), and appreciate the strong pastoral care in the school.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral and vocational development of students has been audited across all subjects although the impact of this is not fully evident. There is appropriate provision for sex and relationship education.

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 now a well qualified and experienced group of supportive and challenging critical friends of the school. The driving force is the spiritual life committee, which is being re-formed as the mission and ethos committee.
- Through robust and reliable processes governors can now hold senior leaders to account for sustaining and improving the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Parent governors are drawn from an eclectic mix of other faiths and cultures to represent their children, and contribute fruitfully to the positive ethos and experience of Holy Trinity.

Collective Worship

- Monitoring of collective worship is making a growing impact on the quality of liturgies and assemblies because, through frequent reviews, there are now shared expectations of what constitutes good practice.

- The 2014 review of spirituality saw the reinvigoration of the chaplaincy, the choir, and the emerging involvement of more students in the planning of the liturgies. The evidence in the quality of the personal prayers of older students written around Christmas, points to students who have grown into a quite remarkable, deep relationship with God.
- Students 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 participation.
- Form tutors are likewise held accountable for the quality and impact of class collective worship.

Improvement planning

- Improvement planning is marked by clear priorities, success criteria, and review intervals. In-service provision, support material, and retreats are provided for staff
- 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 as a Catholic school well and understands what it needs to do to improve further along the road to excellence.

Religious Education

- Self evaluation is rooted in close evaluation of performance in RE, which show that the processes for review are effective
- The lesson observation schedule has been disrupted by recent illness and absence but will hopefully be resumed and have impact on more consistent teaching and learning.
- Analysis of examination results has led to different, more effective strategies to support areas of weakness.
- Learning walks and book trawls at Key Stage 3 have uncovered issues to do with some inconsistency in teaching, and marking which is not yet fully effective in driving improvement over time. As a result the school has focussed on this in its CPD programme to bring all teaching up to the best.
- The school's evaluation of attainment in RE is clearer than its analysis of progress especially lower down the school. This is being swiftly rectified.
- There is effective support for newly appointed teachers and those who do not have a background in the Catholic Faith.
- 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.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Religious Education

- Attainment at Key Stage 3 is good. Student baseline assessments are similar to English. By the end of Key Stage 3 their progress and achievement over time is good. Disadvantaged and SEN students' progress matches that of the others because of extra support in lessons. Attainment in RE at GCSE is broadly in line with both national and diocesan averages and is improved compared with results in earlier years. Achievement is also good, and predictions for the coming examinations suggest even better progress and results.
- Strengths include enjoyment and real interest, knowledge of other faiths, mature discussion and reflective writing
- The majority of lessons show good learning taking place.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and engage the students 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.
- Areas for improvement lie in sharper assessment and quality of feedback that shows students how to improve steadily over time. Some marking is not effective nor does it challenge the more able to make real intellectual effort.
- There is inconsistency in teaching in Key Stage 3.
- The school has ensured that the curriculum is structured around the revised Curriculum Directory for RE.
- There are many opportunities for students to exercise concern and generosity towards others through helping each other, outreach to the local community and charities, as well as to support national and international charity work such as CAFOD.
- Cultural visits, residential retreats, Duke of Edinburgh Award, working with primary schools and other engagements, widen the students' knowledge and experience so that they become role models for others.
- The school recognises the need to keep engaging with the Church within the wider community, especially the parishes of the feeder schools.
- Priorities for improving outcomes in RE are appropriate and the resultant better progress is evident in students' 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.

Collective Worship and Spiritual Development

- Students have many opportunities to develop their skills and talents through assemblies and liturgies, using art, drama, dance and music. There is an annual re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross around the school, and last year's Born for Us production was an inspiring Lenten reflection.

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform largely to those of the school.

- Everyone, regardless of their faith background, is affirmed, respected, and readily welcomed to participate in every aspect, including the Mass, which is at the centre of all key celebrations during the year.
- 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.
- Students are reverent and focussed in Mass and ever willing to play a part and share around the Eucharistic table.
- Staff pray daily together, an example of leadership successfully nurturing their personal spirituality, the result of specific spirituality Inset, and CPD on how to pray meaningfully with the students.
- Provision and practice of prayer in tutor time are good though not yet universally so.
- The uptake for retreats and reflection days is high, and those returning share their experiences with the rest of their peers.
- In conversation students are enthusiastic about the prospect of more opportunities to contribute more to the spiritual and prayer life of the school and take more ownership of it. They are all willing and waiting.
- The student body is a truly remarkable exemplar of inclusion, given the rich mix of different faiths and cultures, and is a beacon for others to see a community of young people living together sharing the same values of forgiveness, service, and equality of all before God

Recommendations

To improve further the school should:

- evaluate assessment data more frequently and clearly so that it informs learning objectives, and embed consistent formative marking especially at Key Stage 3.
- enable every student to contribute more practically to the Catholic life of the school and play their full part in the self evaluation process.



March 2015

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

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of Holy Trinity School, Birmingham, 9th-10th March 2015

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.

Holy Trinity is a school with a good Catholic life and religious education. It is a shining example of a joyful, inclusive and cohesive community of many faiths and cultures, sharing the Gospel values of forgiveness, service, and equality of all before God. The leadership is good, monitoring carefully and effectively the quality of Catholic life and religious education. Students speak highly of the school and their behaviour is exemplary. Their attainment and achievement in RE are both good, the result of predominantly good teaching. The students enjoy their work in RE and are eager and valued members of the school community. Their response to collective worship is positive and wholehearted. Chaplaincy and choir have been reinvigorated and pupils now take a greater lead in planning assemblies.

I have recommended that the school encourage the students to take more ownership of, and initiative, in evaluating the Catholic life of the school. Also, that teachers, especially in Key Stage 3, use assessment data and the marking of work as a more effective aid to learning, and to challenge students to reach their full potential.

We met and talked with many of the pupils, whom we found were invariably welcoming and courteous, and we were impressed by the contribution they make to the school community through their excellent behaviour. The student body is a truly remarkable exemplar of inclusion, given the rich mix of different faiths and cultures, and is a beacon for others to see a community of young people living together sharing the same values of forgiveness, service, and equality of all before God. They are a credit to the school and to their families and those who care for them.

It was a pleasure and privilege to inspect Holy Trinity, and I wish it every success on its continuing journey towards excellence.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Skivington
Diocesan Inspector