



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ARRAN WAY, SMITHS WOOD, B36 0QE

Inspection dates	23 rd - 24 th May 2016
Reporting Inspector	Ms Julie-Anne Tallon

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	219
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr A Bisconti
Telephone number	0121 770 1892
E-mail address	office@st-john-the-baptist.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2011
DFE School Number	334/3516
Unique Reference Number	104107

Headteacher	Mr Ian Gallagher
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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 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 two full and four part RE lessons with the headteacher.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time and the impact of prayer and meditation on their everyday lives.
- Meetings were held with the vice-chair of governors, staff, and parish priest.
- The inspector observed a prayer service, a meditation, 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- St John the Baptist is a smaller than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of St John the Baptist in Solihull.
- A large number of children come from homes in wards of high social deprivation.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 24%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 20.8% which is below the national average of 30.7%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average, as are the numbers with special needs.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.

Main Findings

- Leadership provided by the headteacher is strong and has ensured that school has managed a period of staff movement well to ensure that staff are now well placed to best develop Catholic life and RE. Governors have recently appointed an excellent RE leader, resulting in very strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school evaluates RE, Catholic life and collective worship well and is very clear about its own issues and weaknesses and how it plans to address them. This is evident from training given and the impact is evident in children's books. The cycle of implementing, monitoring and evaluating is understood well by school leaders. It is fully understood that leadership of Catholic life is the responsibility of headteacher, senior leaders and governors.
- A culture of tolerance and respect for all is strongly promoted throughout school, this includes developing knowledge of other cultures and religions and equipping pupils with the skills and empathy to prepare the way for the second coming.
- The new diocesan proforma for self evaluation is in use and identifies next steps. It would be further enhanced by developing the impact of work already taking place. Interviews with school leaders showed that impact is evident and recorded.
- Low numbers of baptised Catholics and parental involvement have been identified as a concern and addressed through parent audits, questionnaires, family workshops and open mornings. Response to these has been positive and as a result improvements have been made to ensure the importance of Catholic life is reflected in the appearance of the school. Feedback to these improvements is positive from all stakeholders and is evidenced through interviews and analysis of parental feedback.
- It is very clear that the Catholic faith permeates all areas of the curriculum. Medium term plans specifically identify where God can be found in all subjects. This is reflected in classroom and corridor displays. This ensures a cohesive RE curriculum with clear links to other subjects – addressing a previous inspection point for development. Pupils talk confidently about Jesus in other curriculum areas and one child simply stated: "God is running through your veins."
- The introduction of meditation for all ages is a very powerful addition to school that is enhancing prayer life and supporting pupils to deal with the demands of life in modern Britain. Pupils passionately share their views on the strength and importance of meditation as a form of prayer and how it will benefit them as they get older.
- The Catholic Pupil Profile virtues are strongly promoted throughout school. Children can relate these to scripture as well as how they can be applied to everyday life.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- School self evaluation judges Catholic life and collective worship to be good and there is much evidence to support this judgement.

- Children are developing an ownership of collective worship. The recent addition of a prayer garden is valued by the children and very much based on their ideas. Children speak confidently about their roles as liturgy leaders and how they make a difference to their community through school Mass and 'preparing the way for Jesus', a direct reference to their school mission statement, which children in upper Key Stage 2 particularly value.)
- Thorough and organised monitoring of collective worship is in place ensuring high quality use of scripture and celebrations of Feast Days. Strong self evaluation of this has led to the RE leader trialling a further developed method with two year bands, which fully involves pupils in the monitoring. This provides further evidence of the school's drive for constant improvement and full pupil involvement. The aim is this will be rolled out to whole school if successful.
- It is evident through discussion with pupils and analysis of data, that the school is the primary teacher of the faith for large numbers of pupils. They clearly have a sense of belonging and pride of being part of St John the Baptist School community. Pupils worship through song is strong and pupil interviews demonstrated how, through song, the children's spirituality is being developed.

Governance

- Governors are well informed about standards in RE through headteacher reports, curriculum leader feedback, and planned visits to school. Governors understand that as a result of movement in senior and middle school leadership, not all data analysis has historically been robust. Governors are confident that, based on progress since September, the recently appointed headteacher and RE leader will move this on rapidly.
- Governors can speak confidently about the high quality collective worship in school and Church as they have been fully involved in a variety of parish and school celebrations.
- Governors understand the importance of the school self evaluation and as a result of being well informed understand that realistic timescales for improvement are essential. They appreciate clear deadlines on the school improvement plan and are aware that not all actions can be completed in one year. They promote and contribute to a two year rolling programme of self evaluation and school improvement, with clear deadlines and updates.

Religious Education

- The school follows diocesan guidelines for teaching RE and is very responsive to diocesan expectations. The curriculum meets the Bishop's Conference requirements.
- Detailed planning focusing on improvement of previous areas for development within attainment targets in RE is in place. This is further enhanced by the whole school focus on engagement with questions of meaning and purpose. The 'I wonder' walls in each class are a powerful way to promote reflection and discussion. This is strongly supported by the parish priest.

- Marking is clear and precise with question prompts, to which pupils respond, helping them to deepen their understanding of both scripture and how it impacts on their day to day lives.
- Monitoring and data analysis of assessment has identified prior weakness in Upper Key Stage 2 progress. Recent management of staff appointments partnered with both internal and inspector lesson observations, book and planning scrutiny, show that this area is being addressed. Scrutiny of data identified some misconceptions when assessing RE knowledge of SEN pupils. Training and support has been given and this has been addressed.
- Lesson observations, book scrutiny, and pupil interviews reflect that purposeful learning is embedded. This is evidenced through positive attitudes to learning from the pupils and a passion to promote the Gospel message which starts at the headteacher and permeates through all staff.

Spiritual, Moral and Vocational Development

- A detailed audit of spiritual, moral and vocational development demonstrates the many opportunities provided to pupils of all ages to develop spiritually and morally. A culture of ambition to be the best person God created you to be is evident throughout the school. This is led determinedly by the headteacher who has high aspirations for the children of St John the Baptist School. Parental feedback shows that the local community welcome the opportunities provided for their pupils.
- Pupils speak passionately about Catholic Christian Values and are proud that they are trusted to identify virtues being used in everyday life by their peers. The potential to be recognised by your peers or adults with a Virtues Award is something they are very enthused about.

Overall effectiveness of the school

- It is evident that the Catholic life of the school is going from strength to strength under the strong leadership of the headteacher. The recently appointed RE leader has a clear understanding of her role and excellent capacity to ensure further improvement within RE. The importance and purpose of self evaluation for improvement is understood. Current teaching at the school promotes purposeful learning, engagement, enjoyment, and progress for pupils.
- The inspector agrees with the school's own evaluation that this is a good school.

Recommendations

The school should:

- Ensure consistency in relation to expected attainment in RE and embed the work that has already taken place in this respect
- Work already begun on rigorous analysis and checking of data by the RE leader needs to become fully embedded to ensure rapid progress and to address areas of inconsistency.