



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST CLARE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Robert Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham B20 3RT

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Inspection date	5 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
Reporting Inspector	Denis Cody

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	420
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Barbara McPhillips
Telephone number	0121 554 3289
E-mail address	enquiry@stclare.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2012
DFE School Number	330 3406
Unique Reference Number	103476

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Victoria Rivett</b>
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Previous inspection:	Good
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This inspection:	Good
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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 six RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny, attended three class-based prayer services 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 the RE link governor, the headteacher, the RE subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly 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, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan and teachers' planning.

## Information about the school

- St Clare's Catholic Primary School is a large two-form entry school. It is one of two primary schools within the parish of St Francis of Assisi, Handsworth, Birmingham. It also has a nursery providing part time education for 26 pre-school pupils.
- The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is much higher than the national average.
- Currently 24% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The school serves an area of significant social disadvantage.
- The proportion of children with special education needs is above the national average, while that of pupils with a statement of special education needs is close to the national average.
- Academic attainment on entry is below the national average.
- A new headteacher and RE leader have been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school has high pupil mobility.

## Main Findings

- St Clare's Catholic Primary School provides a very good Catholic ethos and environment in which its pupils can learn and grow.
- Leaders and staff have an outstanding commitment to supporting and promoting all aspects of Catholic life.
- Collective worship is good throughout the school. Its Catholic nature and teaching are reflected and reinforced in regular school Masses, prayer services and assemblies in which children participate enthusiastically and reverently.
- The quality of RE is good. Good teaching and learning, with some outstanding practice, ensure positive outcomes for pupils in terms of attainment and progress, and enjoyment of and interest in RE.

- Leadership of all aspects of Catholic life and RE is strong and effective. Leaders ensure Catholic life and RE are given a high priority in school improvement planning which is informed by self-assessment and review.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- The overall quality of Catholic life at St Clare's Catholic Primary School is very good, and in some respects outstanding; collective worship is good; and spiritual and moral development is good in terms of provision and impact.
- In its Catholic life the school lives out its mission statement which welcomes everyone into its community to live, love and learn together in the light and example of Christ. Pupils have been involved in an exercise to translate this message into a school prayer which is on display and in regular use throughout the school.
- In a school with a high rate of pupil mobility, this mission is realised in the way newcomers are readily befriended and made welcome by existing pupils. It is also evident in the harmonious relations between pupils and the respect they show for each other's beliefs.
- Catholic teaching underpins school policies and procedures, and is implicit in displays and prayer areas throughout the school. A refurbished school chapel, blessed recently by Bishop Byrne, further proclaims the Catholic nature of the school and provides a vibrant focal point for prayer.
- Catholic life is especially evident in the pastoral care provided through a well-established inclusion team. Pupils and their families are supported through drop-in surgery sessions, language and parenting classes and the services of a parent link worker.
- As an inclusive and safe school, which welcomes and supports vulnerable children and those seeking sanctuary, it has been awarded 'School of Sanctuary' status.
- Retreat days are organised for staff which help to model and develop the Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils have also taken part in retreats at Alton Castle, arranged as part of their sacramental preparation.
- Children of all beliefs understand and respect the Catholic nature of the school. They can discuss, at an age-appropriate level, how religious beliefs inform and guide their own lives and their understanding of right and wrong.
- Individual class saints, drawn from different nationalities and whose lives reflect issues and situations relevant to children today, are used as faith role models. Their lives are researched and their feast days celebrated.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is actively promoted by the school. The values promoted in the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile are introduced through school assemblies, displays and class teaching. 'Guardian Angel' certificates are awarded to children who live out these values. As a result, pupils are able to discuss these values and how to apply them in their lives.
- Pupils develop an understanding of individual vocation and service to others as they move through the school. They willingly embrace charitable projects and fundraising for local and national charities.
- Pupils play an active part in the Catholic life of the school, conscientiously undertaking positions of responsibility and leadership. House leaders and class faith ambassadors act as role models. They lead some of the religious and prayer life of their class and the whole school.

- The school provides opportunities for pupils to offer service to others. Pupils are actively involved in Citizens UK and the Young People's Parliament. Playground leaders and support buddies help look after younger children outside the classroom and organise activities for them.
- Pupils have some experience of evaluating the Catholic life of the school. The faith ambassadors have provided feedback on aspects of the school's prayer areas. However, pupil involvement in monitoring and evaluation should be planned more often.
- Prayer and collective worship, reflecting the Catholic character of the school, are central to the daily life of staff and pupils.
- Whole school and class collective worship is well planned and helps reinforce Catholic values and virtues, the Church's liturgical seasons and feast days.
- Regular whole-school Masses are held in school and groups of children attend Mass in the parish church on a monthly basis. They play an active part in the service, delivering prayers and readings in a thoughtful and reverent manner.
- Children engage enthusiastically with collective worship, playing a prominent part in assemblies and prayer services. They understand the messages and gospel values shared in collective worship. They also respond positively to opportunities for voluntary prayer, such as lunchtime rosary sessions during October.
- Opportunities exist for older children to develop independence in planning and leading collective worship. Faith ambassadors lead worship in their own and younger age classes. Through involvement with the Caritas Christi in Urbe group of schools, they have also been able to share in liturgy preparation and prayer services with pupils from other Catholic schools. All pupils now need to plan and lead collective worship.
- Children are familiar with different ways of praying, and different styles of prayer. Newly introduced collections of prayers for each year group are designed to ensure all children have a good knowledge of traditional prayers. They are also introduced to prayer through meditation and are encouraged to compose their own prayers for particular occasions or activities.
- Children provide some feedback on their experience of collective worship through pupil interviews, for example following the recent visit from Bishop Byrne. However, this should now be planned more often.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is good, and outstanding in terms of its commitment to the Catholic mission of the school.
- School leaders and governors actively support and promote the Catholic mission of the school. They ensure it is always at the heart of school life and improvement planning and that the children's spiritual, moral and vocational development is a key priority.
- The school is an active member of the *Caritas Christi in Urbe* partnership of Birmingham inner city Catholic schools, who work together to develop all aspects of Catholic education. Faith formation of staff has been promoted through shared liturgies and retreats. Networks of newly and recently qualified teachers have been established and a programme of in-service training designed which is successfully addressing issues of staff induction, retention and development.
- Both Catholic life and collective worship are monitored by the headteacher, RE subject leader and senior leaders. Improvement planning is informed by an annual

audit of Catholic life, observations of collective worship, planning reviews and feedback from staff and governors, with some input from parents and pupils.

- This programme of monitoring should be extended to include the impact of spiritual, moral and vocational education, as identified in the school's own self-review.
- Priority is always given in the school development plan to improving aspects of the Catholic life, mission and ethos of the school. Progress towards achieving the targets included in this, and the RE action plan, are reviewed and evaluated termly by the senior leadership team and governors.
- A staff 'Faith Team' has been formed to support collective worship across the school. This has extended leadership opportunities to more staff members and further involved them in the religious life of the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and development needs of school and are able to hold school leaders to account. They receive and discuss reports from the headteacher and RE leader and regularly visit the school, attending Masses and assemblies and working alongside staff and children in classrooms.
- All staff, including the headteacher, have performance management objectives relating to Catholic life or RE and all job descriptions emphasise the importance of supporting the Catholic ethos of the school.
- The Catholic nature of the school is proclaimed to the wider community through its website and weekly newsletter, and is emphasised during discussions and induction meetings with parents.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- In terms of its leadership, outcomes and provision, the quality of religious education is good, with some outstanding features.
- RE is a core subject and is included with Catholic life as a school development plan priority. Improvement planning for RE is led by the headteacher and RE leader and is based on evidence derived from self-evaluation.
- The RE link governor works closely with the subject leader and is an active presence in the school, observing and taking part in monitoring all aspects of RE.
- Governors oversee provision for and leadership of RE and are aware of its strengths and areas for development regarding pupil attainment and teaching and learning. They are kept informed by the active involvement of the link governor and by discussing data and reports from the headteacher and subject leader.
- The subject leader promotes the quality of RE by providing direct support and guidance for newly qualified teachers, non-Catholic teachers and those new to the school. By attending diocesan cluster group meetings and disseminating information to the staff she shares good practice and introduces new ideas and initiatives to the school.
- Outcomes for pupils from RE are positive both in academic attainment and progress, and in their spiritual, moral and vocational development.
- Children's engagement with RE shows they are interested in and enjoy their RE lessons. They are able to discuss their learning and how it relates to their lives.
- Children achieve well throughout school in comparison to their starting point. Baseline assessment data shows the great majority enter school with very little knowledge or experience of the Catholic faith. They make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 2 most are achieving at or above age related expectations in RE.
- Children in receipt of pupil premium and those for whom English is a second language achieve well in RE.

- Children with a good knowledge and understanding of RE but with poor literacy skills are able to record their work in a variety of ways. As a result, pupils' attainment in RE is better than in reading and writing.
- The quality of both teaching and learning in RE is good with some outstanding practice.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are interesting, creative and planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- In their lesson planning teachers identify appropriate links to spiritual, moral and vocational development and to prayer.
- Strategic questioning is used effectively in lessons to assess and challenge pupils' learning. In their marking teachers use gap tasks to ensure pupils' understanding and to extend pupils' learning.
- To consolidate and improve their learning, children are taught to review their work using shared lesson objectives and success criteria.
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored by lesson observations, learning walks and book trawls carried out by senior leaders including the RE link governor. Attainment data is analysed and pupil interviews are carried out. Consequently, the school clearly knows its strengths and areas for development in RE.
- Pupils' work is assessed and recorded by class teachers in line with diocesan recommendations. They analyse the attainment of individual pupils and significant groups. This data is collated and analysed by senior leaders to monitor progress across the school and over time. Outcomes are shared with staff and are reflected in individual class and whole school planning and in staff training. As a result teachers have an accurate knowledge of pupils next steps in learning.
- Leaders have clearly identified groups of pupils that are underachieving. Currently there is a school emphasis on improving boys' performance which is below that of girls. This is a focus for monitoring of planning, lesson observations and book trawls and for external staff training.
- To further develop expertise and consistency in assessment, school leaders are enabling teachers to moderate pupils' work with colleagues from across the school, rather than just within their own year group.
- The RE curriculum is based on the archdiocese strategy, *'Learning and Growing as the People of God,'* and follows the recommended diocesan planning. It reflects religious seasons and key feasts and celebrations and is enhanced by additional activities such as presentations from outside speakers, school visits and retreats.
- Good spiritual, moral and vocational teaching is supported by the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile, focussing on Catholic values and virtues.
- Delivery of the RE curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom enter school with below average literacy skills and understanding. There is a strong focus on speaking and listening in RE teaching and assessment, which enables them to successfully access the curriculum and achieve well.
- In response to the previous inspection, the *'All that I Am'* programme was fully implemented for Years 5 and 6 and linked with health education. More recently, an audit of relationship and sex education provision across the school has been carried out and a new policy, agreed by governors, is to be introduced next year.
- Children have an awareness of other faiths and religions, visiting places of worship and celebrating other cultures.

## Recommendations

### In order to improve the school should:

- Formalise the children's role in the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and collective worship.
- Involve greater numbers of pupils in planning and leading collective worship in a variety of settings.
- Monitor the impact of spiritual, moral and vocational education.