



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Part of Saint Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi-Academy Company**

Mill Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 2TH

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Inspection date	23rd - 24th November 2016
Reporting Inspector	Ms Julie-Anne Tallon
Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005	

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Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Mrs Caroline Beech
Telephone number	01384 818435
E-mail address	admin@st-mary-bh.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2011
DFE School Number	332 3303
Unique Reference Number	141489

**Principal** Ms O O'Beirne

Previous inspection: 1

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This inspection: 2

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



**MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY**

## 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 4 full RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with the principal.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny 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 directors of the multi-academy company (MAC), parish priest, and chair of the academy committee, link academy committee representative, parents and subject leaders.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of collective worship, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour. All of this took place with the principal.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, pupils' exercise books, special times books, parental questionnaires and a variety of evidence files.

## Information about the school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school. (207 on roll)
- Half of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups with nearly a quarter of pupils who do not have English as their first language. This is higher than the national average.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 56%.
- Disadvantaged pupil numbers are broadly in line with the national average.
- SEND pupil numbers are higher than the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average.
- Since the last inspection the school has joined a multi-academy company, has appointed a new principal and has new RE subject leaders.

## Main Findings

- Despite significant changes and rising expectations in the inspection criteria, the new leadership of school has maintained Catholic life and RE as major strengths of the school.
- A culture of respect permeates all areas of school life resulting in pupils from a variety of backgrounds and abilities confidently sharing the teachings of Jesus.
- There is consistently good teaching of RE throughout the school with elements of outstanding provision. This results in good progress and attainment across the school.
- Lesson observations and book scrutinies show that teachers know the needs of their pupils and plan work accordingly.

- Pupils participate fully and respond to well led collective worship which is monitored by senior staff and the RE link academy committee member. The school promotes the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile and is working with families to celebrate and promote the values and virtues programme.

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

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

- The provision and outcomes for Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development overall is outstanding.
- It is very evident from learning walks, observations and interviews that all stakeholders are fully committed to the mission of the Church in education.
- The ethos of the school is very clearly one with Christ at the very heart.
- Displays around school are vibrant and enhanced by pupils' responses. These further reinforce the school's support of pupils to develop the Catholic life in their school beyond lessons.
- Pupils talk confidently about what they can do to make a positive difference in modern Britain.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their input into forming their Catholic school and shaping activities. This was evidenced through preparation of prayer services in classrooms, helping to shape the Catholic Life Action plan and pride in the developing Marian prayer garden.
- Strong and passionate leadership from the principal results in the whole school community being fully committed to 'going forth' to live the mission of the Church. This was evidenced repeatedly through whole school and class collective worship.
- Observations of collective worship show that, as a result of appropriately planned activities and support, children of all ages are developing a sense of wonder and awe.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is very well planned accounting for faith backgrounds; both Catholic and non-Catholic children in Year 6 discussed the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation showing respect for each others' beliefs. All children feel fully included in the Catholic life of the school.
- The principal's use of digital literacy to develop the understanding of Gospel stories engaged the children. Careful and focused questioning deepened pupils' thinking.
- There is evidence of monitoring of collective worship which is following a schedule to take place throughout the year. As a result, the school is now well placed to develop evaluation of these observations and implement changes as required.
- Pupils' understanding of the Year of Mercy and how to live out the corporal works of mercy is outstanding. This was evident in pupil interviews as they discussed the impact of the Year of Mercy on their lives in school.
- Pupils are very proud of and eagerly list the positive impact on their lives of faith leaders, anti-bullying ambassadors, school councillors and peer mentors.
- Observations by the inspector during formal and informal times showed that a culture of respect permeates all areas of school life, resulting in confident pupils from a variety of backgrounds and abilities openly sharing the teachings of Jesus.
- Not every child in the school is a baptised Catholic but all children share the teachings of Jesus with pride and passion.

- Communication with parents and the parish is strong. This is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents about the school in the recent questionnaire.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different types of vocation is greatly enhanced by the well planned annual Vocations Week.
- An understanding of service to others was evident through pupil discussion and questioning about charitable fundraising taking place in school.
- The school promotes the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile and is working with families to celebrate and promote the values and virtues programme. Pupils are very proud of the display in the school hall focusing on this and explained that it is an ongoing display which is updated termly.

## **LEADERSHIP**

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

- The principal of St Mary's Catholic School works in strong partnership with the chair of the academy committee and the RE link academy committee member. Her drive and ambition for all of the pupils of St Mary's is deeply motivated by the Church's mission.
- Academy committee members hold the school to account in its Catholic life; the RE link academy committee member is involved in monitoring the action plan and has completed training to support the school in its role.
- Allocation of funding to Catholic life reflects the commitment of the school to ensuring that plans to constantly improve are given the necessary resources.
- Analysis of sacramental preparation has been evaluated resulting in an investment in new resources to further deepen children's understanding.
- Monitoring of collective worship is in place involving staff, representatives of the academy committee and pupils. Evidence of pupil evaluation has resulted in planning for improvements in the Marian prayer garden.
- The school development plan identifies next steps to help children understand how RE and the teachings of Jesus relate to their everyday lives outside of school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

- Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education are all good.
- The leadership team have worked diligently to implement diocesan recommendations to develop standards in RE against rising expectations.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and discussion with pupils shows that RE work is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Analysis of assessment data shows good progression between key stages, and good attainment and progression is evident in year bands.
- An action plan is in place to address underperforming groups and their understanding from religion, and about a deeper meaning and purpose and how it relates to their lives. Although actions were evidenced in lessons, at the time of the inspection it was too early to judge the impact of this plan.
- Lesson observations and book scrutiny show that teachers know the needs of their pupils and plan work to match these needs. Work is completed in a

variety of forms including written work, cartoon strips, role play and radio recordings, which the children clearly enjoy and respond positively to.

- The RE link academy committee member is regularly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of RE within the school through participation in learning walks, pupil interviews and attendance at collective worship. Findings from these activities are reported to the board of directors and to the academy committee. As a result, the academy committee members have an accurate understanding of the provision and outcomes of RE within school and are aware of the next steps for continued improvement.
- Pupils value their teachers' feedback on how to improve their work.
- Pupils were observed collaborating well with each other during lessons, this was evidenced through some strong use of talk partners. Pupils respect and support each other with their learning. As a result, attitudes to learning in RE are very positive.
- RE lessons are treated with special respect and attention, evidenced through lesson observations and pupil discussions. Pupils were very proud to explain that lessons start with a prayer and a lit candle.
- The school's Vocations Week has a commitment to the teachings of Venerable John Henry Newman "God has created me to do Him some definite service." Consequently, the pupils have an excellent understanding of vocation in their own lives.
- Carefully planned links with relationship and sex education within the teachings of the Church provide pupils with age appropriate understanding.
- The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference to provide the appropriate amount of curriculum time dedicated to RE and collective worship.

## Recommendations

### In order to improve the school should:

- Further develop systems for formally evaluating collective worship by staff, pupils, and governors to support accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Develop independent learning within Attainment Target 2 in RE, ensuring that pupils engage with questions of meaning and purpose.