



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lindale Drive, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 8DZ

Inspection date 25th - 26th May 2016
Reporting Inspector Victoria Brickley

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	96
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Marese O'Dwyer
Telephone number	01902 894787
E-mail address	office@st-bernadettes.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2011
DFE School Number	860/3481
Unique Reference Number	124372
Headteacher	Mrs J. Keegan-Hobbs
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2

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 four RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- 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 vice-chair of governors, the headteacher, also the subject leader and staff, pupils, parishioners, parish priest and parents.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, whole school Marian procession 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' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Bernadette's school is a small village school in the parish of St Michael and St Bernadette, Wombourne.
- The proportion of Catholic pupils is currently 30%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is below average
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average
- Baseline assessment shows that all children have limited knowledge of the Catholic faith on entry.
- Since the last RE inspection there has been a change in school leadership, teaching staff, significant environmental/building developments and class structure.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life of St Bernadette's is outstanding. All of the pupils understand the Christian faith and follow the example set by the staff, governors and parishioners who support the schools in its journey of faith.
- Collective worship is good, with a range of provision, including a strong prayer life, and pupils' engagement. The recommendation at the last inspection that pupils should have greater involvement in planning and leading collective worship has been acted upon by the headteacher and governing body.
- Strong and committed leadership is evident in all areas of the school, notably in its faith life and ethos, through the drive and passion of the headteacher, who has been in post for three years. A number of teaching staff are new to the school and there

is clear evidence of support and staff development to ensure that high standards of teaching and learning in RE are maintained. Staff and governors work with the headteacher to ensure that outcomes for pupils are improved and that all the team work in harmony together to get the very best for the pupils.

- The school has a clear vision and has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes leading towards school improvement are rigorous and have been developed, since the last inspection. The school has high expectations which, alongside the vision, are shared and disseminated to all staff, which creates a common purpose for faith and the schools ethos.
- There is strong and committed governance at St Bernadette's. Governors demonstrate engagement and commitment within their roles and this is evident in their regular visits and involvement with school life. Monitoring of leadership, assessment, school improvement, teaching and learning is rigorous and this monitoring cycle is well embedded.
- A culture of pride in the school is evident throughout. The strong example from the headteacher and all staff permeates through the children and a commitment to the importance of Christ being at the very centre is very evident across the school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is outstanding. The school's mission of 'Achieve, Believe and Care' is evident throughout the entire school. Pupils and staff put this mission into practice.
- Staff, pupils, governors, and parents share a clear understanding of what is involved in being a Catholic school as is evident from their positive feedback on the Catholic ethos, mission and values.
- The children have a grasp of why they support charities and what it means to live as a Christian.
- Pupils contribute well to the evaluation of the Catholic life taking responsibility, for example, for the quality of liturgies in classrooms and the standard of reading in preparation for Mass and assemblies.
- Pupils contribute very well to evaluation through questionnaires and discussions with the headteacher. These surveys are completed by the pupils and parents annually.
- Monitoring information is used effectively by the headteacher and governing body to make secure evaluations of the impact of the school's Catholic life on pupils' attitudes and relationships.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life

- Catholic life is clearly of paramount importance to the school's leadership. There are excellent structures and systematic processes in place for self-evaluation which

show the school striving for improvement. The school has a clear picture of where it needs to go to improve further.

- The Catholic ethos at St Bernadette's is tangible. Leaders have maintained and developed the strong sense of family thus enabling pupils to feel safe, cared for, respected and valued. Pupils see the staff members as people they can trust and speak to in times of need.
- Staff are an integral part of the evaluation process with class teachers being held responsible for the quality and evaluation of class prayer times. All classroom areas have a prayer focus linked to the liturgical year.
- There is a structured timeline for staff induction and in-service training from the Diocese to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education and staff response. Staff are positive about this training and are able to articulate how this has developed their understanding of working within a Catholic school.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship

- The pupils plan and present their own assemblies and in class liturgies. Pupils are keen to contribute to the prayer and Catholic life of the school. Examples of this include; developing a Marian garden, input into plans for the prayer garden, which is under way, prayer partners and planned charity work. Pupils in Year 6 have recently taken part in a sponsored sleep, raising money for the homeless, linked to the Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd, showing their commitment to the common good.
- Pupils are respectful and reverent when praying together and when part of meditations.
- The pupils' enthusiastic singing and reverent demeanour in both the assembly and Marian procession was excellent.
- Collective worship and religious education contribute well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. They have a good knowledge of traditional prayer and the lives of various saints. They can give examples of saints who they see as role models and are able to explain the reasons why they are so significant.
- Leaders and governors are steadfast in their commitment to continually driving the Catholic life of the school, including strengthening existing partnerships with the parish and community.

The quality of the school's provision of collective worship

- The school actively engages with parents, local parishioners and other local faith communities in its provision. Parishioners regularly attend assemblies, liturgies and whole school Mass. During the inspection, parishioners played a vital role within the Year 3/4 RE lesson and were interviewed, by the pupils, on their important role within the community. Parishioners and parents attend the Marian procession.
- Pupils have focussed increasingly on organising and planning collective worship, this was evident through pupil interviews and pupil surveys.

Leaders and Managers

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- The school's monitoring and evaluation procedures are good and well embedded. The SDP includes RE and Catholic life and prioritises future actions. For example, the school recognises the need for further data analysis in relation to significant groups. The impact of this is that the governors have a clear, detailed knowledge of the school and its Catholic vision.
- The headteacher provides good leadership of RE and Catholic Life. She monitors and evaluates the Catholic life of the school, for example through observations during assemblies and in classrooms. This led to new initiatives such as the school providing more opportunities for children to plan and lead classroom liturgies.
- Staff complete an annual ethos questionnaire which reviews the provision and impact of Catholic life in the school and contributes to future planning. They are able to explain the positive benefits of training they had received from the headteacher and diocese and how this has impacted upon their knowledge and practice.
- The governing body is committed to the school and its Catholic ethos. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and know staff and pupils well. The RE link governor and member of the standards committee frequently visits the school to monitor books, assemblies and conduct pupil interviews. The minutes of their meetings contain examples of challenging questions particularly in response to the headteacher's reports.
- The link governor for RE and the vice-chair are a significant support to the headteacher as RE leader. Both have had a long involvement with the school and give valuable, expert advice.
- The governing body holds the headteacher to account for her leadership of RE and Catholic life. The chair of governors is the RE link governor, who enables the governing body to achieve a clear and detailed picture of the subject. This in turn feeds into the headteacher's performance management and the annual subject improvement plan as part of an embedded cycle of school improvement.
- The parish priest visits the school and the school plays an active part within the parish, for example through regular Masses in the church and parishioners playing a part in RE lessons. The parish priest will move parishes in the autumn term and the school plans to establish further links and take more of an active involvement with the sacramental preparation.
- Parent and pupil feedback on the quality of Catholic life and collective worship in the school is obtained through annual questionnaires. The school acts appropriately to the outcome of the questionnaires which contributes to future action planning.
- Governors are very aware of their responsibilities for both Catholic life and religious education and play a full part in shaping the direction of St Bernadette's as a Catholic school. They know the school well and are prepared to challenge where necessary and so make a real difference to the outcomes.

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate provision for collective worship and implement any necessary improvements

- The headteacher, staff and governors successfully involve pupils in its day to day life, through engaging with pupils and staff discussion; feedback is listened to and acted upon.
- The development of Catholic life and collective worship is a continuous focus with necessary improvements being driven through monitoring and evaluation. For example, the school has evaluated the need to increase staff development for class teachers to lead collective worship within the classroom setting.
- The headteacher and governing body monitor the quality of prayer and liturgy and how it develops for pupils throughout the school. Measures have been put into place to ensure that pupils grow in their knowledge of how prayer and liturgy can play an important role in their lives.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- RE is an integral part of the robust monitoring and evaluation cycle by the headteacher and governing body. Assessment sheets, learning walks, book scans and lesson observations, in conjunction with governors, interviews with staff, pupils and parents, all feed into the school improvement plan for RE and Catholic life.
- Family life and sex education policy is reviewed every two years with the school using the 'In the Beginning' scheme from Year 1.
- Improvements are driven by an inspiring headteacher who has a clear vision and passion for RE and Catholic life. She continually communicates her vision and expectations and therefore has transformed school life at St Bernadette's. She frequently uses diocesan support and leads staff professional development to further enhance the teaching and learning of recently appointed staff, including newly qualified teachers.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Levels of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with diocesan expectations with evidence of at least half exceeding age related expectations. Baseline assessments on entry indicate low prior knowledge and religious experience, but pupils make good progress in Early Years and throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Samples of work are moderated internally by teaching staff. This embedded practice will be developed by seeking further opportunities for external moderation through a collaborative partnership within the diocesan cluster group.

- Writing in RE through Key Stages 1 and 2 is consistent with the good quality of writing in English. The pupils have sufficient opportunities to ask and respond in detail to questions.
- The quality of written RE work is good with a range of well-matched activities. There is clear progression as the pupils move through the school. Staff development in RE has ensured that the quality and marking of written work has further developed since the last inspection with many examples of RE extended pieces of writing.
- Pupils enjoy RE lessons and their learning and progress in RE are good.
- Staff use the data from assessment to determine the next steps in learning. The school has identified the need to analyse pupil performance data further to ensure all key groups are identified and achieve well. By doing this the school will be able to identify any gender, SEN, disadvantage or other significant attainment gaps and use this analysis to bring about improvement.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

- Teaching in RE is at least good, with some that is outstanding, and it has been consistently improving over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge, based on strong support from the headteacher and the diocese. The headteacher jointly plans with year groups and models good practice lessons for staff professional development.
- Both teachers and support assistants have high expectations of the pupils. Staff plan in detail, demonstrate high ordered questioning and enable the children to be independent learners, this enables the pupils to be motivated, engaged and interested in learning.
- There is clear progression as the pupils move throughout the school. Green for growth comments are included in marking, designed to challenge children and move them on in their learning. There is evidence of the pupils responding to the comments.
- Pupils' work is regularly assessed according to the focus strands. Attainment and progress are recorded in line with diocesan recommendations.

The effectiveness of the curriculum in RE in promoting pupils' learning

- Basic knowledge of other faiths is covered through topics assigned to different years. This has been achieved through working on the charity aspects within different religious faiths.
- Every year group has a learning journal with a colourful record of their journey and participation in the spiritual life of the school.
- Teaching is well supported where teachers lack detailed knowledge of the Faith and staff work hard to develop their knowledge. The support is given from the headteacher, who teaches in Reception, Year 1/2 and Year 5/6. Relationships and behaviour are excellent in all classes so that pupils enjoy working with their teachers and each other.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The effectiveness of the whole school curriculum in developing pupils spiritually, morally, and in their understanding of vocation

- The school encourages pupils to consider how they can be what God wants them to be; this is achieved through the teaching and learning, saints as a role model and through the development of charity work. This in turn forms a basis for their understanding of vocation and the Catholic ethos.
- Children's awareness and understanding of community is developed through their support and fund raising. Every class has chosen their own charity to support during the Year of Mercy.
- Pupils know how the 'Achieve, Believe and Care' mission is central to their lives and how they can use the school mission and ethos in following the teaching of Jesus.
- Older pupils have a good understanding of vocation. Pupils have high aspirations for themselves and are eager to discuss them. They can share the lives of various saints who they believe are role models, for example, St Francis and Mother Teresa who spent their lives caring and looking after people who were less fortunate.
- Year 3/4 pupils benefited from a visit from parishioners who actively support the Church's outreach work. Their vocational knowledge and their explanation of their roles within the school and parish community proved to be a huge benefit to the pupils.

The quality of provision for pupils' development of Catholic Christian values

- Since the appointment of the headteacher in 2012, there have been significant changes in personnel, in the environment, in school priorities and in the monitoring of Catholic life, collective worship and teaching and learning of RE.
- Pupils clearly benefit from the Catholic life of the school as this is reflected in their excellent behaviour towards each other.

Recommendations

- Further develop a greater analysis of pupil performance data to ensure all key groups are identified and confirm that they are achieving well.
- Develop effective links between the school and parish to enable sacramental preparation to be jointly led.
- Provide further staff development for class teachers to lead collective worship within the classroom setting.