



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Holy Family Multi Academy Company
High Street, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 4EJ

Inspection dates: 2nd and 3rd July 2019
Lead Inspector: Maureen O'Leary

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: **Good**

Catholic Life: Good

Religious Education: Good

Collective Worship: Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection: Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- Inspired by the headteacher, all staff and governors are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic Life of the school.
- Relationships at the school are excellent. Pupils and staff treat each other with high levels of respect and kindness.
- Pupils enthusiastically value and actively participate in the mission of the school.
- Teachers plan Religious Education well, so that it engages pupils' interest. Increasingly, pupils are able to connect their learning in Religious Education to the way they choose to live their lives. As a result, they make good progress and meet diocesan expectations.
- Each school day is centred around meaningful times of prayer. Staff provided pupils with many opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship. They respond to this challenge with growing confidence and skill.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are not monitored and evaluated rigorously enough.
- Pupils need greater challenge in Religious Education to achieve at the highest standards.
- Pupils need a better understanding of their own vocation.

- Pupils have a limited awareness of other faiths.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the monitoring of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship takes place more regularly and that it is rigorously evaluated to greater inform improvement planning.
- Raise teacher expectations of pupils in Religious Education. Develop their use of questioning and feedback to greater challenge pupils' learning.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to understand what it means to have a vocation.
- Provide pupils with a greater awareness of other faiths.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

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

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- Pupils are proud of their school and genuinely strive to follow their school motto 'Through God's Love We Will Achieve.' They talk about how they trust in God and their teachers to guide them to achieve their goals.
- St Mary, the school patron, is seen by the pupils as an important role model. They say that she teaches them to, "Trust in God all the time."
- Teachers, additional classroom adults, administrative staff and site staff all provide a caring and nurturing environment for pupils. Their care is rooted in the Catholic Life of the school. As a result, the school is a happy place where pupils feel valued by the adults who look after them.
- Pupils appreciate how adults in the school listen to their ideas. The pupil prayer leaders have monitored the school environment and, using funding from the parents, teachers and friends' association, have made improvements to class prayer spaces. However, all pupils are not routinely involved in the school's evaluation of Catholic Life.
- The virtues promoted in the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP) are well known by pupils. The prayer leaders give pupils special awards for following the virtues. The pupils talk of how they all, "Try to live up to them." They feel that they help them to, "be wise in our choices" and to, "Take the right path."
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They are polite and considerate to each other and to the adults who work with them. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6, routinely escort the youngest pupils to the parish church for Mass. They carry out this responsibility with vigilance and compassion.

- Pupils are given a number of leadership roles that support the Catholic Life of the school. For example, the school council has been responsible for raising money for playground equipment and trips. Play leaders help everyone to have a happy playtime. The enthusiastic eco team know that their work protects the world God created for them.
- There are many displays and artefacts that help pupils to understand about their school patron, the CSPP and the sacraments. The beautiful school environment promotes its Catholic Life. The outdoor areas and gardens are tenderly cared for by staff and pupils and give glory to God's creation. The cleanliness and order throughout the school celebrates the dignity of each person, as they learn and work.
- Through their regular fund raising, their kindness to each other and their service to the local community, pupils recognise how important it is to use their God given gifts to serve others. They visit residents in a local home and the parish Thursday Club for the elderly. However, their understanding of their own vocation is less well developed.
- The parish priest is well known to the pupils and staff through his weekly visits to school. He plays a significant part in the spiritual life of the school and is able to support the Religious Education curriculum (for example, visiting classes who are studying baptism or the sacrament of the sick). He appreciates the leadership of the headteacher as a committed Catholic and the hard working and caring staff.
- Many pupils and their families are active members of the parish. A number of pupils act as altar servers for school and parish Masses. The close position of the church and the strong faith of a number of families means that they regularly call into church on the way to school to pray.
- Pupils are prepared for the sacraments through a parish programme, which is supported by the school.
- Visits to St Chad's Cathedral and the diocesan youth retreat centre at Alton Castle help pupils to appreciate that they are part of a diocesan family.
- Pupils are taught about relationships and sex education through the 'All That I Am' diocesan programme. Additional resources are also currently being considered and diocesan training has recently been attended.
- Parents speak very positively about the school as a friendly and caring place. They are made welcome to attend Masses, assemblies and other events. They value the spiritual and moral development of their children, which the school promotes. Parents talk appreciatively of how their very young children lead them in prayers, learnt at school, before meals at home.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- School leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. In particular, the living faith of the headteacher inspires pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Senior leaders have ensured that Catholic Life is the first priority in the school learning improvement plan.
- Although school leaders plan some monitoring of Catholic Life each term, it is not always completed. As a result, opportunities for developing the Catholic Life of the school are missed. However, where monitoring has taken place, for example, reviewing the environment and Catholic Life books, improvements have then been carried out.
- Governors are informed about the Catholic Life of the school through the headteacher's report, the school newsletter and their very regular visits to school.

As a result, they have a good understanding of its strengths and how it is developing.

- Staff have reviewed the Catholic Life of the school and have attended MAC Masses/retreats. These have supported their strong commitment to its development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Teachers plan lessons that are varied and engage pupils' interest. Pupils are given opportunities for extended writing and role play is used well to support learning. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- Teachers use the diocesan strategy effectively to plan the focus for each lesson and they demonstrate a good subject knowledge. Pupils, in turn, have a good understanding of their learning and can use a wide range of religious vocabulary very well.
- Inspectors saw some very good examples of teachers questioning pupils to extend their learning. For example, in Year 3, pupils were consistently challenged to explain their answers when discussing the healing of the Ten Lepers. Carefully structured questioning in Year 4, matched with a variety of ways to respond, encouraged pupils to think deeply about their faith. This practice needs to be consistent in all teaching.
- Teachers give pupils many opportunities to listen to and read scripture. Older pupils are particularly confident at locating passages in the Bible. As a result, most pupils have an age appropriate or better understanding of the Bible.
- Pupils' work is generally well presented but the handwriting of a number of pupils would benefit from further improvement. Pupils sometimes record on worksheets. Although these can be useful in supporting pupils' writing, they often restrict their learning and can appear untidy in books.
- Throughout this year, there has been a greater focus on pupils making links between what they learn in Religious Education to their own lives. As a result, a child in Reception class could explain that, "365 days of the year, Jesus lives with us," and a Year 2 pupil could explain, "We should go out and tell people that Jesus is alive." This emphasis on linking learning to living a life of faith needs to continue as a focus when planning lessons.
- Work in pupils' books is marked and their efforts are praised by teachers. The Reception class teacher's annotation of pupils' work informs her judgements of their learning well. However, many teachers' comments rarely develop pupils' learning or suggest ways in which they can improve.
- Pupils make good progress in Religious Education and the large majority of them meet diocesan expectations.

- Teachers make very good use of Religious Education lessons to develop pupils spiritually and morally.
- Additional adults generally support pupils well to complete tasks in lessons and offer very good pastoral support. However, consideration should be given to the best use of their skills during teacher led class discussion.
- There are many high-quality displays in classrooms that support pupils' learning in Religious Education. They celebrate pupils' work and provide valuable key religious vocabulary.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- Leaders and governors ensure that Religious Education curriculum meets all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Assessment data and subject leader reports in Religious Education are shared with governors. This keeps them informed about standards, staff training and new initiatives.
- Religious Education is part of a planned cycle of monitoring. However, the frequency of this monitoring should be increased, and the rigour of its evaluation should be improved.
- Staff receive regular training from the Religious Education subject leader, which has improved their teaching. Both the subject leader and headteacher provide teachers with ongoing individual support. This is highly valued and appreciated by staff.
- Earlier this year, senior leaders directed staff to jointly plan the unit of work on Lent. This has successfully supported staff to plan progression in lessons and to increase expectations in each year group.
- The Religious Education subject leader has provided useful training for staff about age related standards. This is beginning to help teachers both plan lessons that challenge pupils more and to accurately assess pupils' attainment. This focus on providing greater challenge for pupils needs to continue.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Praying together in a variety of ways is an important part of the daily experience of pupils. Throughout the week prayer is planned for the whole school, key stages, classes and voluntary lunchtime groups. It is valued by pupils and staff.
- Pupils take part in all times of prayer and worship with reverence and respect. They particularly enjoy the Wednesday Word assembly led by the headteacher. Her sense of fun encourages them to guess the Word of the week and ensures they all take an interest in the assembly.

- The school community regularly attends Mass at the parish church. The pupils are well prepared to read the Liturgy of the Word and to act as altar servers. Their attitude to Mass and to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which follows Mass, is reverent and faithful. This attitude is greatly helped by the excellent Year 5 & 6 'Guardian Angels' who sit with the younger pupils and act as faith models.
- Some key feasts and seasons are celebrated jointly with the parish. The crowning of Mary in May and the Carol Service both involve the school and parish community. Pupils also participate in shared liturgies with other Catholic schools at the Good Shepherd Mass. These times of worship help pupils to understand that they are part of a wider church family.
- All staff provide many opportunities for pupils to plan and lead Collective Worship. Pupils lead prayers in their own classes as well as during lunchtimes. They use a variety of methods such as silence, holding crosses, prayer stones and scripture reflection. As a result, pupils are growing in confidence and creativity when helping their peers to pray.
- Pupils often pray spontaneously in the prayer garden, during class Collective Worship and voluntary lunchtime prayer club. They greatly appreciate this time to pray for their own needs and those of their families.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of the traditional prayers of the Church. The whole school stops to pray the Angelus at lunchtime. The pupils recognise that through this prayer they come closer to their school patron.
- The messages that pupils receive from times of Collective Worship have a profound effect on their spiritual and moral development. Pupils talk about how Collective Worship, "Gives me belief in God," and "Helps me get ready for the day."
- The provision of prayer bags by the school helps pupils to pray with their families at home.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- The headteacher's knowledge of the Catholic faith and her strong relationship with all the pupils helps her to regularly plan and deliver times of worship that are enjoyable and meaningful.
- Staff have received some training about Collective Worship.
- Senior leaders have extensively promoted pupil planned and led Collective Worship. Consequently, it is a regular feature of school life.
- Some monitoring of Collective Worship has directly informed improvement planning. For example, an interview with pupils helped adults to provide more times of quiet and greater use of the prayer garden.
- However, planned monitoring of Collective Worship has not always been completed. As a result, opportunities for developing it further have been missed.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	143636
Local authority	Worcestershire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range	4-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	194
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of local academy committee	Sharon McLeod
Headteacher	Jackie Smith
Telephone number	01386 446748
Website address	http://www.stmarysrc.worcs.sch.uk
Email address	office@stmarysrc.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- This one form entry school serves the parish of The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady and St Egwin in the market town of Evesham.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 72%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below age-related expectations.
- Since the last inspection the school has joined the Holy Family MAC.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Maureen O’Leary and Paul Madia.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school’s provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with two governors (including the chair of governors) , the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class Collective Worship, a voluntary lunchtime prayer meeting and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils’ behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, data about pupils’ attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school learning improvement plan, the Catholic Life/Religious Education action plan, teachers’ planning and learning journals.