



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Monitoring Visit

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NORTON-LE-MOORS, STOKES-ON-TRENT

Inspection dates	10 th May 2013
Reporting Inspector	Brenda Beale

Monitoring 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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Simon Edge
School address	Ford Green Road Norton-le-Moors Stoke-on-Trent ST6 8EZ
Telephone number	01782.234820
E-mail address	stmaryrc@sgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2006
DFE School number	861/3403
Unique Reference Number	124316

Headteacher	Mr Ian Beardmore
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE





12th May 2013

Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill,
B46 3EA

Mr Ian Beardmore
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Ford Green Road
Norton-le-Moors
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 8EZ

Dear Mr Beardmore

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 10th May 2013

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 10th May and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the governor in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 5 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a section 48 inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, a governor representative, the subject leader for RE and members of her team, pupils, observed one lesson and two assemblies, carried out a learning walk of all lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

Catholic Life

The outstanding Catholic life of St Mary's is rooted in the school leadership team's deep commitment to leading the school in faith. The Catholic mission of the school, with the development of children's spiritual, moral and vocational understanding, is seen by all the staff to be the fundamental purpose of the school. Strong leadership ensures that all staff and children share in and help promote the Catholic ethos. The school rightly judges its Catholic life to be outstanding. This judgement is reliably founded on effective monitoring and evaluation processes. Leaders conduct a wide range of monitoring activities which relate specifically to Catholic life, provision and outcomes. Analysis of the findings provides a secure basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development to inform specific action planning. RE and Catholic life is led by an experienced capable team headed by the deputy head. There are systems in place to enable pupils, parents, all staff and governors to feed their views into the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. Audits of Catholic life and ethos, community cohesion and spirituality are completed annually by teaching and support staff, and are analysed by the RE leader prior to developing the new action plan to ensure that the school continues to develop and improve its Catholic life.

A faith-based target is given to all staff members to ensure that all adults in school are accountable for the Catholic life of the school. Through formal and informal discussions with all members of staff the leadership is secure in its judgement that all adults understand that they are responsible for the promotion of the Faith. Great attention is given to checking and assessing pupil participation and response to Catholic life and collective worship. The school has sound evidence on which to base the judgement that both are outstanding. Areas for development move quickly from identification to planning and then to successful implementation. This was seen in the introduction of meditations where pupil response was considered unacceptable during Advent. A plan, beginning with meditations at every fourth staff meeting, built staff confidence enabling them to lead meditations in their own classes. They are now an everyday part of prayer and collective worship. The judgement



that pupil response is now outstanding is reliable. The governing body are a supportive and challenging influence within St Mary's. The governors are confident in providing high levels of professional challenge for the religious education and the Catholic life of the school. Regular full governing body meetings and sub-committee meetings ensure that governors are fully informed and in control of decisions made within the school. The link governor with the responsibility for RE meets termly with the RE team to discuss and review the subject action plan. The RE link governor is also invited to attend the RE team meetings and undertakes learning walks in the school.

Religious Education

Self evaluation accurately judges progress and attainment in RE to be outstanding. Rigorous monitoring in RE is embedded into the school's action plan. The RE team monitors provision and implementation of the curriculum and pupil progress and attainment in a wide variety of ways. Regular book scans, planning scrutiny, lesson observations and pupil interviews all give valuable insight into current practices and provision. These are then fed back to teaching staff during staff meetings. All teaching staff have a RE based target as part of their professional development. In addition, rigorous assessment is in place, with a specific assessment focus each year, with evidence gathered from a cross-section of abilities in each class, levelled as 'best-fit' and analysed by the RE team, to ensure children are performing in line with national expectations or beyond. Support for new teachers is scheduled with a member of the RE team to ensure they are confident in delivering the RE curriculum. New teachers are always invited to observe RE lessons taught by members of the RE team or other teachers at the start of their appointment to ensure they understand expectations that the RE lesson is significantly different and distinct from any other lesson. A very high emphasis is placed on the quality of teaching: nothing but good or better is acceptable. It is rigorously monitored and a range of strategies put in place to support and develop RE teaching and learning across the key stages. The school is justly proud of the quality of RE lessons; the excellent input from teaching and support staff and the exceptional response from pupils are outstanding. During governor curriculum committee meetings, RE and the Catholic dimension of the school is often a key issue on the agenda. The meetings provide governors with more detailed information about learning and teaching, curriculum developments, data analysis and pupil attainment. Staff and governors meet regularly and there is a planned monitoring programme in place; subsequently, governors are kept well-informed and up-dated on a regular basis.

A particularly outstanding aspect of the Catholic life of the school is the provision of opportunities for the children to extend their spiritual, moral and vocational development outside the curriculum. The exceptional quality of teaching also impacts greatly on the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. These outstanding aspects have been used as subjects for the purpose of a survey identifying best practice in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

The school has clearly identified in its planning the areas to develop to maintain its outstanding practices. It has an important role and responsibility to use its expertise to develop the leadership and management of RE across the new Multi Academy Company of which it is a member.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale
Diocesan Inspector