



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Holy Spirit Multi-Academy Company

Rye Piece, Ringway, Bedworth, Warks, CV12 8JN

Inspection dates
Reporting Inspector

20th – 21th October 2015
Mr T J Hughes

Diocesan Inspection carried out with the framework used for s48 inspections

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	199
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Father Michael Gamble
Telephone number	024 76 315279
E-mail address	admin3502@welearn3502.com
Date of previous inspection	December 2010
DFE School Number	937/3502
Unique Reference Number	141817

Headteacher **Mrs Debbie Huxtable**

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 1

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 3 full RE lessons.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the academy committee, governors, parish sisters and staff.
- The inspector observed the celebration of Mass, an assembly, two periods of class meditation and undertook learning walks to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the learning improvement plan, teachers' planning, pupils' exercise books and learning journals were read alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- St Francis is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school serving the parishes of St Francis Bedworth and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Bulkington.
- Bedworth is a mixed area of council and private housing
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 86%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 11%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average, as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.
- St Francis became an academy as part of the Holy Spirit Multi Academy Company in March 2015. References to governors in this report indicate members of the academy committee.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life, religious education and collective worship at St Francis Catholic primary school are outstanding.
- The school has accurately evaluated itself and the wealth of evidence seen shows that there is a clear understanding of how to improve and sustain the high standards achieved.
- The school leaders demonstrate their vocation, commitment and vision in such a way that all aspects of the schools' provision of RE, Catholic life and collective worship have developed markedly since the last inspection.
- The recent re-structuring of the learning improvement planning cycle together with systematic reviews have had a positive impact on the provision of RE and the spiritual life experienced by the pupils.

- As a result of purposeful discussions amongst governors and school staff, engagement with the life of the parish has led to a deeper understanding of faith for pupils and their families.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- A determined and systematic drive to ensure that self evaluation of the school's provision has had a major impact on the school since the last inspection. All members of the school and parish community are involved in reflecting upon what the school offers its pupils and how the central values of faith are made manifest every day
- At the centre of everything said and done in the school are the school values, which have been developed in consultation with parents, pupils, staff, governors and the parishes. The children are able to remember the values and what they mean for their daily lives using the acronym CHRIST - Compassion, Humility, Respect, Integrity, Service, Truth. These values are ever present in the minds of all members of the school and provide a focus and measure for the school's self evaluation.
- The school has developed a range of strategies to evaluate its Catholic life and collective worship. The school has worked hard to ensure that all members of the community have a voice. For example, parents are encouraged to give verbal feedback as an ongoing activity as well as written reflections at the end of the Sacramental programme. This feedback then feeds into the planning of the programme for the following year.
- After celebrations with the parishes the headteacher and staff talk to parishioners and note any comments or thoughts they may have on the school's collective worship and its Catholic life in the parish. This evidence is then brought to the staff team and governors to incorporate in on-going development discussions.
- An annual audit, completed by staff and governors, provides the perspective of these stakeholders on collective worship and the Catholic life of the school and how the ethos and school values are realised by each member of the school community. School leaders are keen to take account of the range of views and feed in these considerations to the planning for the following year. The school stands out in the way it seeks consultation with all. For example, the newest members of the teaching staff acknowledge how they are given a voice in the development of the Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils are active members of the Catholic life of the school and contribute to the evaluation of this on a regular basis. During the inspection pupils spoke confidently about their involvement in reflecting upon and planning their participation in the development of their learning in RE. They bore witness to how they shape collective worship and it was evident that their ownership of this element made their spiritual life in school truly meaningful for them as growing young people of faith.
- Monitoring is a key feature of self evaluation and leaders and managers have a robust and comprehensive system of monitoring of RE, Catholic life and collective worship that is in line with the expectations of the other core subjects. Formal monitoring is undertaken conscientiously by the headteacher and subject leader,

where they celebrate the strengths and richness of the Catholic life and collective worship, but also identify areas where provision needs improvement. For example, when reviewing the use of prayer bags school leaders realised that this initiative would only have impact if the year group staff and pupils took ownership of it.

- The parish priest and governors also contribute to monitoring. For example, a foundation parent governor monitored children's use of the Bible and suggested a home learning/family activity would encourage the children to use their Bibles more frequently at home – the school then incorporated bible stories into each year group's prayer bag and children now have an RE task in their learning journal at least once every half term.
- Governors receive a termly report on the Catholic life of the school and parents are kept informed through the school newsletter. However, the school and parish priest recognise that communication with the wider community needs enriching in order to spread the mission of the school and parish and share important information about their work.

Governance

- The governors of the school are highly committed to the RE, Catholic life and collective worship of the school and see the importance of their strategic role. Prior to the academy conversion governors presided over a period of rapid improvement and their active involvement in monitoring the school's provision contributed to ensuring the high quality of the spiritual life and standards in religious education.
- They are well informed about the standards in RE through reports from school leaders as well as their attendance at school to talk to pupils, review books and visit lessons and prayer times.
- The learning improvement plan was shaped by the governing body to always include a key RE objective each term. Furthermore the headteacher's performance management routinely incorporates an element of RE, where the committee strategically targets outcomes for the school's provision of collective worship, RE and Catholic life.
- Collaborative training for the organisation of the multi academy company has been undertaken. School leaders are determined that future structures will allow the school to make a wider contribution to the local Catholic community and also provide opportunities to enrich the school further. Collaboration in training has also continued with other local Catholic schools leading to the governors broadening their view of the school's provision and raising expectations of performance.
- The make-up of the academy committee is strategic and effective as it incorporates individuals from both parishes served, the parish sister, who undertakes a wealth of spiritual development and key members of the staff and parent community. As a result, governors' input is both well informed and broad in its contribution to school improvement.
- The governors are clear about their own needs and skills as they enter in to a multi academy company with other local Catholic partnership schools. They recognise their capacity to make a contribution to the new MAC and understand that this venture will help the school to broaden its perspective as Catholic education moves forward locally.

- The academy committee has an acute sense of the need for leadership succession within the school and look to develop up-coming staff members through performance management, training and encouragement.

Religious Education

- The school has accurately judged that teaching, learning and assessment in RE are outstanding.
- Religious education is carefully and strategically managed by the headteacher who shares the RE leadership with an assistant headteacher.
- The RE leadership team undertakes analysis of the pupils' performance at all stages to track progress and identify targets for individuals, key cohorts of pupils and year groups. This data is comprehensively shared with the staff team and the governors. Pupil outcomes are carefully considered and appropriate progress targets for pupils and overall subject development, are set.
- Planned and regular lesson observations, work scrutinies and learning walks demonstrate that staff are committed to planning and delivering a high quality curriculum that is relevant to the children and that will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need as they grow to be Catholics in the world today.
- The school promotes a culture of shared observation, evaluation and discussion. The results of monitoring are shared with individual staff members but additionally, all strengths and weaknesses identified are presented at staff and governor meetings and the issues identified are considered in the next round of planning.
- Monitoring has affirmed that the long and medium term planning, based on the diocesan curriculum framework, have been enhanced and supplemented with broader studies, which take good account of the liturgical year and other world faiths.
- The RE leader maintains a very good record and report on the development and teaching of the subject. This acts as a curriculum tool for all stakeholders and bears witness to the richness of RE in the school.
- The processes for evaluation and support of more recently appointed or less experienced staff, are robust and the continuity of subject delivery is ensured. For example, an experienced assistant head provides mentoring and modelling of RE delivery for a newly qualified teacher in order to maintain and aspire to high standards.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- When children enter the reception class their attainment in RE is low. As a result of a well planned RE curriculum, outstanding teaching, high expectations and sturdy systems of assessment and monitoring, the majority of pupils meet or exceed the diocesan expectations of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The outstanding teaching is sustained with particular emphasis on well co-ordinated team-teaching. Finely tuned differentiation both supports and encourages the less

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

able and challenges high achieving pupils. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are able to fully utilise a range of well-chosen resources to enliven curriculum delivery.

- The governors and senior school staff are fully committed to ensuring that the pupils' experience of Catholic life is rich and meaningful and will assist each child to understand their vocation in life.
- The headteacher constantly seeks to make the school values key ingredients in all aspects of the school's provision. She has the highest expectations of her staff team and the pupils. She has created a productive spiritual relationship with the parish and other local Catholic schools.
- Senior leaders provide comprehensive support and guidance for new staff so that the unity and in turn, the strength of the staff team is maintained.
- The school has a well-established structure for communication with families and the parishes, which is borne out in the rich interaction with parents, parishioners and the local community. Information is not always shared comprehensively and the school does not make full use of digital communication to present its mission.
- The pupils' response to the experience provided is outstanding. The pupils display very good levels of growing spiritual maturity. They are willing to discuss their faith and consider the impact it has on their lives. They understand the presence of God in their lives. They have a growing awareness of the needs their locality and the wider world. Pupils engage with enthusiasm in the promotion of charity for national and international causes. They respond with insight to the experiences and information about other faiths and wider cultures.
- Pupils are inspired by prayer and the use of meditation has enhanced the spiritual dimension of the worship both in school and in church.
- The excellent behaviour, demonstrated by all pupils, provides a secure platform for the school to develop its compassionate ethos and allow full advantage to be taken from the learning opportunities provided.
- The involvement of the pupils in collective worship stands out and demonstrates how well the pupils take a lead in the design of spiritual celebration. For example, the pupil 'liturgy team' organise and take the lead in the celebration of the whole school Mass.
- Pupils are aware of their vocation. They are confident in their faith and how they have been blessed with the task of doing 'God's work' to improve the lives of others and the environment in which they live. The school's emphasis on vocation is manifest in the 'Every Child a Leader' initiative where all Year 6 pupils have a specific role in school and are conversant with targets for achievement within the scope of their personal tasks.
- The school environment reflects the depth of the Catholic life through well presented displays and appropriate prayer focus areas. There is good potential in the use of the outdoor environment, which pupils are eager to have developed to further enhance their prayer life and appreciation of God's gift of nature.

Recommendations

The school should:

- develop communication to reach a greater proportion of the families and parishioners it serves, in order to share its mission as a faith community;
- enhance the outdoor areas to provide more opportunities for children's prayer.



October 2015

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

Dear Parents and Carers

Diocesan Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, 20th-21st October 2015

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

St Francis is a school in which the Catholic life, worship and RE are outstanding. The staff and governors are fully committed to the children and since the last inspection they have overseen a period of significant improvement. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has the highest expectations of her staff and the pupils. The assistant headteachers and the staff team share the aspiration to deliver an outstanding Catholic education for the children. The assemblies, Masses, daily meditation and other aspects of collective worship are thoughtful and inspiring and the children respond with increasing maturity. The Catholic life of the school is enriched by the fact that the values of the school are woven in to all of the school's activities. The children know and embrace the values of compassion, humility, respect, integrity, service and truth and live out these values in all of their work and play.

On entry the children's religious knowledge is limited. As a result of a well planned RE curriculum, tasks that are suitable for each child's needs and outstanding teaching, the children make excellent progress. Sturdy systems are in place to check the progress they make throughout their school life. By Year 6 the children can speak confidently about their faith, recognise what God has given them to do and draw on very good knowledge of the Gospels. The children also become increasingly meditative and are secure in composing and leading prayers. The school has encouraged the children to consider their vocations and as a result, they have a genuine desire to serve others, whether by fund-raising for charity, taking on a responsibility in the school or by making a contribution to parish life.

I have recommended that the school should develop its communication systems in order to reach a greater number of parents, relatives and parishioners. I have also asked the school to consider developing the school grounds to respond to the children's desire to say their prayers outside. I was delighted to visit your school and witness the very high standard of work undertaken by the children and the dedication of the staff and governors. I was impressed with the strong sense of community shared by the school and parishes. I was most grateful for the kind welcome I received from everyone at St. Francis.

Yours sincerely

Mr T J Hughes
Diocesan Inspector