



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stafford Road, Wolverhampton, WV10 6NW

Inspection date 18th. & 19th. October 2017

Reporting Inspector Mr T J Hughes
Assistant Inspector Ms J Tallon

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	343
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Gerard Aston
Telephone number	01902 558935
E-mail address	stanthonysoffice@cloudw.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2012
DFE School Number	336/3303
Unique Reference Number	104374

Head Teacher Mrs T Davis

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 2

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed teaching across 9 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the head teacher, deputy head teacher and the RE subject leader.
- The inspectors 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 chair of governors, governors, the head teacher, the deputy head teacher, the RE subject leader, the parish priest, and class teachers.
- The inspectors attended the celebration of Mass, assembly and collective worship 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 inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP), the school improvement plan, teachers' planning, and pupils' work.

Information about the school

- The school is situated in the parish of St. Anthony of Padua and serves the community north of Wolverhampton.
- The percentage of ethnic minority pupils is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 73%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special needs is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is slightly below national expectations.

Main Findings

- At St Anthony's Catholic Primary School the Catholic life, collective worship and religious education are good.
- Pupils are motivated and engaged in promoting the Catholic mission of the school. They are independent and recognise there is strength in their opinions and their responsibilities to speak up for others.
- Relationships and behaviour and the level of care for all in the school are outstanding.
- Most pupils enter school with below average starting points and they make good overall progress in attainment of religious education.
- The pupils' response to all aspects of faith is sincere, thoughtful and mature.
- The teaching of RE is never less than good.
- The systems of mentoring and coaching staff to improve the quality of teaching in RE are very effective.
- The RE curriculum is broad, tailored to the needs of the pupils and builds on their previous knowledge, resulting in confident learners.
- Collective worship is conducted in a unifying and consistent manner, is reverent and filled with joy.

- The head teacher, deputy head and RE subject leader are an effective team and together they have brought about many significant improvements in the school's religious provision.
- The parish priest and governors demonstrate strong commitment to the school. They have confidence in the senior leaders and recognise areas for development.
- The good systems of monitoring religious provision that have been established, need to be used strategically to further help the school in making improvements.
- The senior leaders and governors should scrutinise the impact of mixed aged teaching to ensure that the quality of provision and outcomes are consistent for all.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The Catholic life of the school is good.
- St. Anthony's is united in its desire to welcome, respect and care for each member of their school family and support them to achieve their very best.
- Under the banner of the recently reviewed mission statement:
'Let your words teach and your actions speak'
the school strives to foster pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and intellectual development.
- The consistency of approach to Catholic life and the way in which it is made manifest is a real strength of the school. All members of the school family appreciate the care they receive, aspire to share the mission and reflect upon how their faith will inform their development as people.
- The head teacher works tirelessly to lead the Catholic life in the school and ensure that relationships and behaviour are outstanding, so that each individual can thrive.
- Pupils understand how their beliefs should be shown in their behaviour and relationships and act upon them. They show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven.
- The talented and developing staff team are totally united in promoting the school's mission and bringing it alive for the children. As a result, the experiences for all children are spiritually rich and supportive, helping the pupils, whatever their needs, to thrive and realise success in all aspects of life.
- The contribution that the pupils make to the Catholic life of the school is impressive. They are reflective and enquiring and demonstrate a strong sense of personal worth and respect for others.
- Pupils clearly understand their beliefs and spiritual values and are confident in asking searching questions in order to gain a deeper level of understanding. They are independent and recognise there is strength in their opinions and their responsibilities to speak up for others.
- The preparation for the Sacraments provides pupils in the appropriate years, an in-depth exploration of faith, forgiveness and a closer relationship with God. The senior staff are considered when designing the programme of sacrament preparation. They have recently altered the approach to better serve the needs of pupils and their families in light of the changing provision within the parish.
- There is a tangible sense of pride in the school, which infects all members of the school family. Pupils and adults are genuinely secure in and grateful for the Catholic environment of the school.
- The Catholic life of the school is visible in a rich variety of ways. Pupils of all ages are influenced and engaged in their faith through their devotion to their

class saints, their perceptions of the Catholic pupil values and virtues, the many artefacts, prayer areas and their respectful awareness of spirituality across the world.

- Pupil 'Liturgical Leaders', from Key Stage 2, audit the school's Catholic environment. As a result of their considerations, classroom prayer tables have been enriched. Furthermore, the beautiful prayer garden owes its sacredness and intimacy to the work of these pupils.
- Pupils are eager to serve one another and can identify the gifts given to them by God. They have a sound understanding of how they can use their talents to help in their school, local community and further afield.
- The service of the parish priest contributes to the pupils' appreciation of God's work in the school and parish community. He aspires to make faith and the work of the Church accessible and available to all. He wishes to communicate to the children and young people of the parish that St. Anthony's is 'not a church for ordained people' but a consecrated community for all.
- The school and the parish work closely in a mutually beneficial manner. The strong heritage of the parish is treasured by governors, staff, parents and children and there is palpable sense of belonging and sanctity.
- The RE provision within the school enables the pupils to support the development of a Catholic ethos and recognise how faith enhances their lives.
- The pupils consider the school a unified community. They see this as a true strength as it gives rise to closeness, security and the opportunity to make the very best of the talents they have been given by God.
- Pupils understand the idea of service and respond readily to the needs of people beyond the school. They are committed to improving the lives of others through alms giving and are eager to come up with suggestions for fund raising for charities such as CAFOD.
- Collective worship at St. Anthony's is good.
- Pupils are reverent, reflective and sincere in all aspects of collective worship. Celebrations are alive with joy; the pupils thoroughly and genuinely enjoy worshipping together.
- Mass is celebrated by the parish priest most weeks in the parish church. This celebration is sacred and carefully planned by the staff and pupils with advice from the parish priest. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in the liturgy and celebration of Mass.
- Pupils are at ease when praying and pray sincerely in class, in church and all around the school site. Their own prayers are contemporary and realistic demonstrating their confidence in God and in one another.
- Pupils sing joyfully and are guided in their choice of hymns to reflect on the spiritual landmarks of the life of the school. Sacred music is inspired by a talented staff musician.
- The school staff guide the pupils in participating in a wide range of prayer to bring about a deeper relationship with God and help all pupils engage in a spiritual dialogue.
- Parents and governors attend the school Masses and further support the prayer life of the children by attending Mass at the weekend. As a result, the pupils embrace the celebration of Mass with reverence and commitment. In turn the programme for Sacramental celebration has strengthened and Mass attendance for these pupils has improved.

- The head teacher, deputy head teacher and RE subject leader lead whole school and phase assemblies throughout the week where they reflect on aspects of the liturgical year, explore key values and focus on the Gospel messages.
- A recent review of collective worship has given rise to improvements in the personal depth of prayer for all. For example, Gospel assemblies for Key Stage 1 now include more opportunities for the youngest pupils to provide verbal contributions with a smaller, intimate audience.
- Class teachers and their pupils present class assemblies focussing on a theme, which often reflects their spiritual development. Parents and governors attend these occasions and reflect on the high quality of the pupils' prayer life.
- The ministry of the parish priest and visiting priests from within the deanery, make an important contribution to the collective worship experienced by the pupils. Mass preparation, retreats and guidance for personal prayer all form part of their work and support for the spiritual fulfilment of the pupils.
- Collective worship helps the pupils to make connections for life in the 21st century by prompting them to understand what the scriptures and teachings of Jesus mean in their lives today. For example, when discussing Gospel values and virtues the deputy head teacher challenged the pupils to recognise these qualities in others each day. Pupils were able to confidently respond and demonstrate how they see their relationship with God as a priority.
- All class teachers ensure that pupils are skilled and equipped in leading and participating in prayer. Different pupils are chosen daily to lead prayers within the classroom.
- The pupils' competency with traditional prayers is growing, with a significant majority of pupils able to recite prayers appropriate to their age.
- Pupils show commitment to being part of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year by attending events outside of school. This participation extends to multi-school celebrations co-ordinated by the Wolverhampton Catholic Primary Alliance (WCPA). A significant number of pupils from across the alliance share their sporting and artistic gifts with one another, further enhancing the depth of this faith-filled community.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is good.
- In the two years since taking up her post, the head teacher has demonstrated unswerving commitment and truly established the Catholic mission of the school. She recognises the God given potential in each individual member of the school family. She nurtures both the pupils and the staff as they work together to fulfil the mission statement every day. As a result, all pupils, whatever their needs and life experiences, are able to grow in faith and personal strength and achieve in their tasks.
- School leaders have ensured that the pupils have a voice and are confident in both reflecting on their own faith and the impact it has on the world around them, and in asking questions about all aspects of religion.
- The close and productive partnership of the head teacher, deputy head teacher and RE subject leader has had a significant impact on the quality of the Catholic life and collective worship, which has improved incrementally in the past two years. The

leadership team has justified the trust put in them by the governors. The reputation of St. Anthony's as a welcoming and caring Christian family, has grown as a result.

- The governors are dedicated and active in their evaluation of the school's spirituality and promotion of Gospel values. They assess provision through learning walks, the scrutiny of pupils' work, attendance at assemblies and through the reports and discussions at meetings with the head teacher and senior teachers. They recognise the need to establish more formal processes for auditing the quality of the school's Catholic provision so that they can be more strategic in their governance and be clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governors are sincere in their desire to uphold the Catholic mission of the school. They have a very real sense of the strong heritage of the school and the wealth of faith and care it can offer to many children and families both now and in the future.
- Governors provide appropriate challenge to school leaders that is focused on improvement. For example, in recent years they have considered the capacity of the school to provide high quality Catholic education and have tasked the senior leaders to ensure RE features in performance management. They have also required the head teacher to provide a three year strategic plan for the school site as an emerging Catholic community.
- The governors support the school in the constructive relationship that it has with all of the schools within the WCPA. The enthusiasm of the governors for joint working is encouraging and this momentum will support the improvement of Catholic education for St. Anthony's and the sister schools within the alliance. However, they are mindful of the challenges that exist in the working dynamic of the WCPA and are committed to both maximising the opportunities and making a contribution to the development of a strong and faithful Catholic community.
- The governors have embraced initial discussions about the formation of an academy company locally.
- The leadership of the school has worked to monitor provision of Catholic life and collective worship. However, the impact of their self evaluation has not been as effective as it might. There is a need for all school leaders to be more analytical about strengths and weaknesses in order to make greater progress.
- The governors are mindful of the need for succession planning for senior leadership and value the inspiring middle leadership demonstrated by teachers who take a key role in enriching the faith life of the school. They also promote the importance of sound induction for new staff so that the school might move from good to outstanding.
- The pupils play an important role in leading the Catholic life of the school. They are sensitive to the emotional and spiritual needs of everyone in the school community. This empathy inspires the prayers that they share and influences their actions as members of the school family.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The provision of religious education at St. Anthony's is good.

- RE is very well led by the co-ordinator. She monitors and reflects upon the school's provision, adjusting and enhancing planning, teaching, learning and assessment to achieve high standards.
- The leadership of RE is gaining momentum as the subject leader, who is relatively new to the role, aspires to outstanding provision across all areas.
- The strength of the school's consistent provision of RE has been brought about by the support that the RE subject leader provides for her colleagues. She ensures that all staff are clear and confident about the syllabus and how to deliver the RE curriculum. She administers useful guidance and appropriate liturgical resources to the teachers to bolster and enhance the experiences for the pupils.
- Pupils enter the school with standards slightly below the national average across all areas, they make good progress in early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and on average achieve well. The majority of pupils leave St. Anthony's with standards in RE in line with diocesan expectations. A minority of pupils exceed these standards.
- For most groups there are no significant differences in achievement. Year on year the majority of pupils grow in knowledge of the Faith and improve their skills. However, the school needs to refine its RE assessment procedures to clearly evaluate the progress made by all pupils who are in the same year group but where some are taught in mixed aged classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are keeping up with other pupils in terms of overall achievement in RE.
- Through improving analysis of assessments in RE the school is beginning to address any cohort specific achievement issues. For example where the pace of progress in a particular year group has not been in line with other year groups, the leadership of the school has deployed key teaching staff to improve pupil performance.
- The pupils enjoy RE, they take particular pleasure in stories from the Gospels. Learning about the life of Jesus leads them to consider their own values in life.
- The teaching of RE is nothing less than good.
- The RE leader, supported by senior staff has established consistent approaches to the teaching of RE. As a result, all pupils are engaged in well structured learning, which has pupils' prior knowledge as its starting point and comprehensively teaches about both the RE syllabus and key aspects of the liturgical year.
- The high quality teaching is brought about through teachers' thoughtful questioning, the well established routines for learning and the many inspired ideas that teachers use to engage the pupils. Art is used as a powerful starting point for discussion; this allows all children, regardless of their ability or perceptions, to access the religious context of the lesson.
- The commitment of the classroom staff to deliver the good learning and teaching is underpinned by very strong subject knowledge.
- The teamwork of all staff in the classroom is excellent. As a result, learning is managed and supported very well indeed for all pupils.
- Within the learning in RE there is a powerful dynamic of enquiry and curiosity, which is strengthened by pupils being given many opportunities for peer discussion.
- The Gospels, liturgy and the concepts of vocation are all made more accessible for pupils through the good and better teaching.

- In a minority of RE lessons the arrangements for mixed aged classes result in some pupils not making as much progress as they might.
- In lessons pupils are eager and sincere. These qualities combined with excellent routines for learning make for most productive teaching and learning in RE. However, the pace of learning for some groups of more able pupils is too slow to allow them to achieve even higher levels of achievement and deeper reflection on their faith.
- The majority of pupils' work in their books is of a very good standard. RE books demonstrate that expectations of care and presentation are consistently applied and show that the staff have high aspirations.
- Very useful work with the Wolverhampton Catholic Primary Alliance has taken place in moderating pupils' RE books. This has resulted in more refined planning to help the pupils reflect upon the impact of faith on their own lives today.
- Teachers are conscientious and thoughtful in their marking of pupils' RE work and it is clear from discussions with pupils that their teachers provide very sound and secure guidance about how pupils can improve.
- The approach to marking in the school has developed very well indeed. Class teachers provide specific and age appropriate feedback to pupils and allow pupils the time to reflect and respond to this, which consolidates the on-going dialogue about faith between pupil and teacher.
- Regular lesson observations and learning walks, conducted by senior staff, monitor the quality of teaching. This has promoted improving provision in teaching and learning in RE.
- RE as a subject is prominent in the planned curriculum. It is given equal status to the other core subjects of English and mathematics. The standards achieved in RE are in-line with the good results secured in English.
- The curriculum is now rich with prayer, exploration of the liturgy and activities, which encourage detailed knowledge of the Bible. Spirituality is regularly found in the school's wider curriculum.
- There is an important emphasis on debate in the RE curriculum. As a result, pupils are inquisitive, not afraid to ask searching questions and confident about sharing their views.
- The wider RE curriculum features activities which foster understanding in democracy, freedom of choice and justice. Within the themes of assemblies, social justice is explored and pupils' awareness of vocation and poverty is heightened.
- The teaching of relationships and sex education is in accordance with the recommended approach of the Catholic Church and is delivered sensitively to meet the needs and understanding of the pupils of all ages.
- Pupils respond to the programme for Sacramental preparation with reverence and sincerity. All pupils, whether they are to receive the Sacraments or not, enjoy and embrace the journey of faith that Sacramental preparation inspires.
- An impressive initiative for exploring other world faiths has been implemented by the RE subject leader. The school has inspired the pupils through themed days, visitors and hands on activities prompting the acquisition and consolidation of their knowledge of different faiths and cultures.
- A key element to the success of the RE provision is the commitment and team-work of staff. The adults who work in the school are united in their

mission. This is a community where everyone is helped to achieve their very best and where the message of Jesus is spread through the words and actions of everyone.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Ensure that the developing systems of monitoring and evaluation are used strategically to assist the whole school to make improvements in Catholic life, collective worship and the teaching and learning of RE.
- Measure the outcomes in RE for pupils across mixed aged classes by refining assessment systems. As a result, ensure that all pupils make progress in accordance with their age and ability.