



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST MARTIN DE PORRES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oakland Rd, Moseley, Birmingham. B13 9DN

Inspection date	25 th - 26 th May 2017
Reporting Inspector	Denis Cody
Assistant Inspector	Marie Conway

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	205
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Richard Marsh
Telephone number	0121 464 5500
E-mail address	enquiry@st-martindeporres.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2012
DFE School Number	330/3382
Unique Reference Number	103467

Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Tomlinson
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Previous inspection:	Outstanding
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This inspection:	Outstanding
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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 three RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- 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, the headteacher, the subject leader, other staff members and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school assembly, an in-school pilgrimage, a class meditation, a class prayer service and a retreat for Year 3. They 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' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan and teachers' planning.

Information about the school

- St Martin de Porres is a slightly smaller than average size primary school, one of two Catholic primary schools in the parish of SS John and Martin in Balsall Heath, Birmingham.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is significantly above the national average.
- Currently 25% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The school serves a socially and culturally diverse area where there is considerable disadvantage.
- The proportion of pupils with special education needs or disabilities is higher than average.
- Attainment on entry is below national expectations.
- In September 2014 the headteacher also took on the role of executive principal of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, part of the Lumen Christi Multi Academy Company, and St Martin's assumed a support role for this school.

Main Findings

- A major strength of the school, and central to its ethos and daily activities, is an outstanding Catholic life, evident in strong committed leadership, concern for pupil welfare and spiritual development and the promotion of Catholic Christian values and virtues.
- The provision of collective worship is outstanding. It is integral to the life of the school, and praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.

- Teaching in RE is creative and often outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress in their learning and attainment, supported by an outstanding curriculum.
- Leadership of all aspects of Catholic life and RE is outstanding. Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation inform improvement planning and ensure leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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 outstanding, despite the relatively low numbers of Catholic pupils.
- St Martin de Porres is an inclusive school where children of all beliefs are welcomed and valued, and where they understand, respect and support the Catholic nature of the school.
- Prayer areas, including a prayer garden, and displays throughout the school proclaim and promote the Catholic nature, beliefs and values of the school and provide opportunity for private and public prayer and reflection.
- These values and beliefs are reflected in a strong sense of community and in positive and supportive relationships among and between pupils and staff.
- The school's commitment to its Catholic ethos and mission is reflected in the care and support it provides for pupils and their families, especially the most vulnerable. To better meet the pupils' learning, emotional and behavioural needs it has introduced small group meditation sessions and employs the services of a family support worker and the Zacchaeus counselling service. A house in the school grounds has been refurbished and is planned to be used as a base to support and develop these activities.
- The school motto, 'Through Jesus we achieve our very best,' is displayed throughout the school and referred to in lessons and assemblies. Children are familiar with it and can discuss how it relates to their faith and to all aspects of their lives, within and beyond school.
- The school actively supports children in their understanding and experience of faith through a culture of faith role models. Under the house system each house is dedicated to one of the English Martyrs. In addition, each class has a patron saint chosen to illustrate the school's wide cultural diversity. Children learn about the lives of these saints and use them as examples and inspiration for their own lives.
- Children of all faiths are confident in discussing their beliefs and they show respect for each other and for other faiths, beliefs and cultures.
- Pupils are eager to participate in the Catholic life of the school and assume positions of responsibility in the school council and the active chaplaincy team whose members have received training from the lay chaplain at Bishop Challoner secondary school.
- This is an area school leaders are keen to develop further by systematically identifying opportunities across the school for pupils to lead and shape more religious activities independently.
- Older children routinely support younger ones and act as faith role models for them. Children in Year 6 support and mentor Reception class children when they first attend school masses, and chaplaincy team members provide visible role models of their faith.
- Pupils from each class take responsibility for charitable fundraising; researching and selecting their own charities to support and organising fundraising activities.

- The school and pupils engage with the wider Catholic community beyond the school. There is a close and supportive relationship between the school and parish which includes shared liturgical celebrations such as May and Corpus Christi processions. Chaplaincy team members have taken part in retreat days with teams from other schools and some pupils attended a special celebration for the Year of Mercy at St Chad's Cathedral.
- School leaders have enabled the headteacher and school staff to make a significant contribution in support of another Catholic primary school.
- Pupils are directly involved in developing the Catholic nature of the school through Catholic life audits, monitoring prayer areas and through informal discussions.
- A striking feature of Catholic life and collective worship is the introduction of in-school pilgrimage trails, through which different aspects of a particular religious, spiritual or moral theme are highlighted in displays at a number of 'stations' around the school. The current trail focuses on the refugee crisis. As children follow the path through the stations they reflect on the meaning and relevance of each one through readings, prayers and discussion, and are invited to add their own written or pictorial contributions to the display.
- The provision of collective worship is outstanding.
- Pupils' understanding and experience of the school's Catholic ethos, the liturgical year and their RE learning, are all reinforced and extended by the messages delivered during assemblies, liturgies and prayer services.
- The weekly whole school prayer assembly delivers a collective worship message for that week, which is incorporated into class discussion and prayer. Children are encouraged to share this message with their families at home.
- Pupils are very positive about worship in school, including the weekly celebration of Mass, and are eager to take part fully, both in the preparation and in the worship itself. Their response is reverent and prayerful.
- The school's positive focus on music and singing enhances the liturgy and prayer life of the school, encouraging pupil participation and enjoyment.
- Prayer is central to the daily life of the school. Children experience a range of traditional and informal prayers and are confident and thoughtful in their use of prayer.
- Children have opportunities to prepare and deliver acts of worship and are eager to take the lead in doing so. In their own classes and for the whole school pupils lead a range of traditional and informal prayers. Children from each class, with teacher support, prepare and lead the Stations of the Cross during Lent and the Rosary in May and October.
- The school council and chaplaincy team play an active part in evaluating the quality of collective worship. Pupils have also completed questionnaires and evaluation sheets which contribute to overall school self-review.
- Members of staff begin each day by meeting and praying together, each taking the lead in turn; staff meetings also begin with prayer. All staff members are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and they all deliver acts of collective worship in school.
- Spiritual, moral and vocational development is very good and often outstanding in terms of provision and impact.
- Catholic values and virtues are taught through the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile. Themes are introduced in school assemblies and masses and further developed in class discussion and prayers. They are linked to RE teaching and where appropriate to other areas of the curriculum, and added to the school website and included in newsletters to parents.

- Pupils have a good understanding of these gospel values and can discuss how they relate to the school motto and to its Catholic life, as well as to their own beliefs and actions.
- The values and virtues are also incorporated into the school reward system. All members of the school community can nominate children whose actions and behaviour demonstrate their practical application. The children are acknowledged in assemblies and large leaves bearing their names are attached to a 'Virtue Tree' displayed in school.
- Children have a clear understanding of the meaning and practical application of vocation and can articulate their responsibility towards other people and to the planet, and how this relates to the teaching of Jesus.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is outstanding.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors, are firmly committed to preserving a distinctive Catholic nature, at the heart of the school, based on the Gospel values and the teachings of the Church.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership for Catholic life, the promotion of which is a key component in all school improvement planning.
- Governors are confident and proactive in their leadership role. There are separate link governors for Catholic life and collective worship, both regular visitors to school, meeting with senior leaders and other staff and working through the Mission and Strategy and Teaching and Learning subgroups. They carry out formal and informal monitoring and report back to the governing body.
- Governors have attended training in leadership of a Catholic school.
- Discussed at each staff meeting, Catholic life and collective worship are subject to constant self-evaluation and review. They are included in the RE leader's annual review document. Staff, pupils and governors monitor quality and provision through formal audits and regular learning walks. Evidence gathered supports future school development.
- At a training day earlier this year, staff considered what it is that makes Catholic schools distinctive and reviewed Catholic life and collective worship against diocesan grade descriptors. An exercise has also been carried out by senior leaders to survey the physical environment of the school and grounds listing physical evidence of its Catholicity.
- Based on its programme of self-review, specific targets are identified and included in the school improvement plan, whose aims are reviewed termly to measure progress.
- School leaders take active steps to promote its Catholic life. They ensure each member of staff receives a Catholic life target as part of their performance management, and they place great emphasis on appointing staff with strong personal faith and a real commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Children are provided with copies of the *Wednesday Word* and a variety of prayer bags to take home to support family worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Religious Education is outstanding in terms of leadership, provision and outcomes for pupils.
- The RE leader, an experienced and successful teacher, provides strong and effective leadership of RE. She is a member of the senior leadership team and works in partnership with the headteacher, senior leaders and the parish priest who is the RE link governor and who regularly supports RE lessons.
- The RE subject lead provides excellent assistance and guidance in RE for all teachers, and specific induction training for Non-Catholic teachers and new members of staff, especially newly qualified teachers.
- Governors have a strong oversight of RE and pupil attainment through the involvement of the link governor and regular reports from the headteacher and subject leader.
- Assessment of pupils' attainment is carried out in line with diocesan recommendations and carefully analysed by class and across key stages. Over time this shows that from a consistently low starting point on entry to Reception class, the great majority of pupils from all groups and abilities make significant progress year on year. Where aberrations appear they are discussed with staff and if appropriate may lead to support or guidance for individual teachers or review of lesson planning or curriculum provision.
- To ensure accuracy and consistency in their judgements, teachers have taken part in moderation exercises assessing children's work together, both amongst themselves and with colleagues from the St Joseph's school.
- To further improve attainment, RE is included in the termly pupil progress meetings during which teachers monitor pupils' performance and progress in key subjects.
- Children are highly motivated and enjoy RE lessons. Leaders ensure that lesson planning provides a range of activities which will develop RE skills. In their discussions and questions pupils display confidence and very good knowledge and understanding of RE.
- Teaching is of a very high standard with outstanding and innovative practice.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and attainment. Teaching is structured around what children 'must', 'should' and 'with challenge could' achieve. All children are encouraged and supported in aiming to achieve the 'could' statement.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and lessons are well-planned.
- Since the last inspection the school has promoted learning in RE by adopting a culture of strategic questioning to challenge and deepen pupils' thinking and understanding of key RE concepts. This is evident in prayer assemblies, lessons, discussions and in marking where 'gap tasks,' incorporating 'End of Phase Expectations,' pose questions or suggest activities to move learning forward.
- Leaders including governors monitor the quality of teaching and learning through analysis of attainment data, and a programme of lesson observations, learning walks and pupil interviews. Work scrutinies examine pupils' work alongside that in Literacy, and where issues of quality or curriculum coverage arise they are addressed.
- Reviews of RE planning have led to the introduction of diocesan Unit Markers and where appropriate links highlighted with thinking skills and Catholic values.
- Provision for RE is outstanding.
- It is built around the diocesan scheme, '*Learning and Growing as the People of God,*' and follows its recommendations in terms of planning and assessment, and

meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference regarding curriculum time for RE.

- The RE curriculum is enhanced by a cross-curricular and creative approach to teaching, with music a particular strength. Retreats, often led by Dan Callow, with a musical focus, are regular features of school liturgy, prayer life and sacramental preparation.
- There is a strong focus on spiritual, moral and vocational development. Assembly presentations from Cafod and other charities have stimulated pupil-led fundraising activities.
- The subject leader attends archdiocese cluster group meetings to ensure the curriculum is up to date with current guidance and good practice.
- Each class has taken part in a pilgrimage to a local site associated with Catholic faith or worship, such as the Oratory, Harvington Hall and St Chad's Cathedral. Following their pilgrimage, children make an assembly presentation to the whole school.
- The RE curriculum ensures pupils learn about other faiths and cultures, and key festivals of other faiths are celebrated.
- The school ethos, motto, Catholic life and gospel values all unite in curriculum initiatives such as meditation and in-school pilgrimages, which have a beneficial impact for pupils and to which they respond positively.
- The 'All that I Am' programme is used in upper Key Stage 2 to deliver relationship and sex education in a Catholic context.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Clearly define the progressive nature of children's involvement in leading, shaping and evaluating religious activities in school.