



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST MARY'S THE MOUNT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Jesson Road, Walsall, WS1 3AY

Inspection dates:

12th-13th February 2019

Lead Inspector:

Debbie Huxtable

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:

- Pupils, staff, parents and governors demonstrate a deep commitment to the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship at St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary School.
- The welcoming environment strongly reflects the Catholic character of the school and its mission in the local community.
- Pupils have a profound understanding of vocations and how it impacts on their daily lives. They enthusiastically offer their gifts and talents in the service of other members of the school community as well as in the global community.
- Most of the teaching is outstanding, and pupils respond with enthusiasm and high levels of engagement.
- All pupils, including the very youngest, demonstrate extremely high levels of reverence and respect during all opportunities for Collective Worship.
- Pupils experiences of Collective Worship are extensive, and staff are dedicated to ensuring all pupils can access both the traditional and contemporary liturgies.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The school's self-evaluation is not yet based on rigorous monitoring and analysis of the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship in order to plan for future improvements.
- Leaders and governors do not use monitoring data to evaluate the school's performance in Religious Education in order to plan for future improvements.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors should develop a more robust system of school improvement that is based on:
 - rigorous monitoring by senior leaders and governors;
 - searching analysis identifying areas for improvement as well as strengths;
 - targeted improvements that lead to improved outcomes for pupils;
 - detailed reporting to governors in order to effectively hold the school to account.
- Review current timetabling arrangements to ensure school complies with diocesan recommendations.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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| 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. | Outstanding |
| 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.

- The school has a welcoming and engaging environment. Staff have worked hard to ensure that it reflects the Catholicity of the school and its ongoing mission.
- The revised Mission statement, "At St Mary's School we aim to live, love and learn as Jesus taught us", is well known and understood by the whole community. Pupils, staff and parents see it as a dynamic statement that governs and dictates their daily lives.
- Pupils are considerate and show respect for themselves and others. They believe they should be kind and caring ".....because that's what Jesus taught us." They have a deep understanding of the need to forgive and be forgiven and can relate this to their actions in lessons and on the playground.
- Behaviour of pupils is at least good with many examples of outstanding behaviour. Staff have high expectations and treat pupils with respect. For example, when a pupil with special needs was finding a lesson difficult, the teacher and support staff addressed this skilfully with care and compassion that enabled all pupils to continue with their learning.
- Pupils appreciate the Catholic Life of the school and recognise the extra demands attending a Catholic school places on them. They enthusiastically contribute through giving their time to serve as school council, liturgy leaders and altar servers.
- Pupils value and respect themselves and each other as equals. They believe that staff are willing to listen to their concerns and everyone is treated fairly. They are developing an understanding of justice appropriate to the year group.

- The Catholic schools' pupil profile (CSPP) has been developed in line with diocesan expectations through assemblies, lessons and displays. Pupils ability to articulate the meanings of the virtues is outstanding, particularly in key stage 2 where pupils could confidently discuss the implications for the way they live their lives.
- Pupils' understanding of vocations is a strength of the school. Links with the Walsall Deanery Vocations Group and the Vocations Brothers mean pupils develop a deep and meaningful understanding of the call to serve.
- Staff at all levels are deeply committed and supportive of the Catholic Life of the school. They see it as a crucial part of their role and give freely of their own time and energies to attend and support many activities within the parish. They are excellent role models for pupils resulting in a strong, supportive and family atmosphere.
- Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils can reflect on the diversity of our world and our call to care for it. This includes a deep understanding that we are all different but deserve to be treated equally and with fairness. This is strengthened by the knowledge and understanding pupils have of different faiths within our community and the world.
- Relationships with parish, local priests and brothers are strong and all actively seek opportunities for pupils and parents to engage in activities beyond the school gates. Family masses, retreats for pupils preparing for the sacraments and parental talks all contribute to the outstanding quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pastoral programmes including relationships and sex education (RSE) are carefully planned and taught in line with diocesan expectations.
- Class Journals effectively record a variety of activities that demonstrate the Catholic Life of the school as well as some practical lessons in Religious Education.

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

- The school's leaders and governors are highly dedicated and deeply committed to the school and its mission in the church.
- Governors made a considerable financial commitment to ensure that the school environment and displays, reflect the Catholic character and mission of the Church.
- The school has planned, acted and made some progress towards the recommendation made by the Section 48 monitoring visit in June 2017. "To formalise the monitoring of Catholic life in the school and to involve both governors and pupils in the process." However, the current self-evaluation lacks cohesion and self-challenge and has limited contributions from pupils, parent and staff.
- The headteacher and her deputy, who is also the Religious Education subject leader, have a strong vision for the school within the community. They are passionate about their school and lead with care and compassion to ensure everyone shares and has a part in delivering that vision.
- Parents and carers feel welcome and supported by the school. They believe the Catholic Life of the school is evidenced in the daily acts of staff and pupils. They appreciate and value the openness of the school and the extra provision such as prayer bags, retreats and parental talks.
- All staff engage in regular high-quality professional development and training. New members of staff take part in an induction programme through the Birmingham Partnership and feel that leadership recognises their different starting points and provides appropriate help and support as needed.
- The headteacher provides information to governors on the Catholic Life of the school on a termly basis as part of her headteacher's report.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. They are highly motivated, enthusiastic, and have a desire to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about how they can inspire and motivate pupils in their lessons. Less experienced staff feel they are well supported and can seek advice and help from the Religious Education subject leader, headteacher or other members of staff.
- Assessment of Religious Education is embedded. Moderation takes place within school each term to ensure consistency of standards across all classes. Moderation also takes place across a network of local schools and means staff can be confident in their judgements.
- Analysis of the assessment data collected is completed at the end of the year, but it is limited and does not provide sufficient rigour to inform assessment for learning or planning for improvement.
- Pupils enter school with little knowledge or understanding of the Catholic faith, but the dedication and expertise of Early Years staff ensures they make accelerated progress and achieve well beyond expectations. This progress continues throughout key stage 1 and key stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 most pupils achieve in line with age related expectations and many achieve above expectations.
- Staff effectively use marking and feedback to ensure pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Questions posed at the end of some pieces of work encourage pupils to think more deeply and reflect on their learning.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and thoughtfully deployed. They provide high level support to teachers, enriching the learning experiences for pupils.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of the Bible, including the common parables and miracles of Jesus. They recognise that it is a special book and treat it with reverence and respect when using it for research during Religious Education lessons.
- Presentation and handwriting are mostly outstanding, and, in some classes, expectations are clearly higher than in other core subjects. Pupils are proud of what they achieve in their books.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of other faiths appropriate to their age and ability. Staff build on this through focused teaching in Religious Education lessons and visits to places of worship. Pupils demonstrate respect and integrity when discussing rites and traditions of other faiths.
- High quality marking and feedback in Religious Education books is in line with other core subjects and pupils are confident how to make improvements to their work. This feedback encourages deeper reflection and asks pupils how they will apply this learning to their own behaviours. Teachers regularly provide challenging questions during lessons as well as in their books.

- Behaviour in lessons is often outstanding and demonstrates how pupils work collaboratively and with consideration for their peers' views and ideas.
- Pupils ability to reflect on the meaning of their learning is very strong. Staff provide extensive opportunities for pupils to reflect and to develop skills of asking key questions of meaning and purpose.

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

- Religious Education is led by an experienced deputy headteacher, who ensures that it has high priority and is treated as a core subject across all areas of the school.
- The Religious Education subject leader is highly motivated and dedicated to her role. She provides support and advice to all staff and is a strong role model for all teachers.
- Planned monitoring takes place and includes annual lesson observations and termly book trawls. Feedback is given to individual members of staff as well as general points for all staff to consider. However, feedback lacks the appropriate challenge and necessary rigour to result in well targeted planning for future improvements.
- Pupils performance is tracked in line with diocesan recommendations, but assessment data is not used to provide extra support or strategies for underachievement of vulnerable groups.
- The link governor, who is also the chair of governors, meets every term with the subject leader and has taken part in pupil interviews and learning walks. He reports back to the governing body each term along with link governors of other subjects. Details of the standards achieved in Religious Education are not shared with governors and they are therefore unable to offer appropriate challenge resulting in strategic action planning.
- All staff are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for professional development. This takes place in school during staff meetings and by outside agencies such as the diocese and the Birmingham Partnership.
- Governors ensure that at least the required amount of curriculum time is given to Religious Education in each key stage, but this is sometimes in large blocks and therefore not in line with diocesan guidance.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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| 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.

- The quality and variety of Collective Worship that pupils and staff participate in is outstanding. Pupils cherish the times when they can pray, sing, reflect and meditate in classes, voluntary groups or as a whole school.
- Praying together is part of every pupils' daily life and it is given high priority. Age appropriate traditional prayers are displayed in the classrooms and used regularly by

all classes. Pupils enjoy writing and sharing their own prayers during lessons and at key times of the school day.

- Celebration of the Mass is central to the life of the school and valued by all members of the school community. Pupils regularly engage in and lead whole school or class Masses in the school hall. They also have a monthly opportunity to attend a Family Mass in the parish church, which is led by pupils and staff and is well attended by school families.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect and reverence during all examples of Collective Worship. Even the very youngest children participate fully and with thoughtful responses.
- The school has several members of staff who are musically gifted and who are committed to ensuring Collective Worship is accessible to all pupils. They have developed an extremely varied and engaging repertoire of hymns and religious songs that are enhanced using sign language and Makaton.
- Class prayer times are outstanding opportunities for staff to model a variety of prayer styles and techniques as well as inspire and motivate pupils. This results in genuine enthusiasm and heartfelt responses from pupils.
- Pupils are creative and resourceful when planning and leading their own liturgies. They confidently initiate prayer and regularly contribute to voluntary lunchtime prayer meetings that are very well attended by pupils.
- Parents value and enjoy attending Masses and class prayer times. They feel welcome in the school and confident that they could ask questions and discuss with staff about their own experiences and those of their children.
- All acts of Collective Worship have a clear purpose and message. They are expertly planned around the seasons and feasts of the Church's year. This results in pupils having in depth knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical life.
- Most pupils are visibly uplifted by the worship opportunities created by their peers and members of staff. Even very young pupils value the time to pause, reflect and sing joyfully.

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

- The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are excellent role models in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship in their school. High priority is placed on it and it is at the heart of the daily life of the school.
- Senior leaders have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the Church's liturgical year and they use this to develop a meaningful calendar of Collective Worship that includes Mass, assemblies, class prayer times and other liturgies.
- Some evaluation of Collective Worship takes place by senior leaders and staff receives feedback. However, opportunities for other members of the school community, such as parents and pupils, to contribute to the evaluation of Collective Worship are very limited. Leaders and governors need to adopt a more formal system of monitoring to ensure further well targeted development.
- Governors are committed to ensuring that staff have appropriate opportunities for professional development and training so that they are skilled and confident in planning and Collective Worship.
- Some governors regularly attend Mass and other liturgies and provide informal feedback, although this is not always evident in the minutes of meetings.

SCHOOL DETAILS

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| Unique reference number | 104232 |
| Local authority | Walsall |
| <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 | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range | 3 – 11 years |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on roll | 235 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Joe Hawley |
| Headteacher | Catherine Amos |
| Telephone number | 01922 720711 |
| Website address | www.st-marymount.walsall.sch.uk |
| Email address | postbox@st-marymount.walsall.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 11 th – 12 th February 2014 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is a one form entry primary school with a nursery. It serves the parish of St Mary's the Mount, Walsall.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 89%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is well above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is slightly above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is in line with the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- 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 these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the Religious Education subject leader.
- The inspector 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 who is also the Religious Education link governor, and the chair of the curriculum committee, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the local priest and a group of parents.
- The inspector attended a mass, an assembly, class Collective Worship 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 inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.