



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blue Lane East, Walsall, WS2 8HN

Inspection dates 18th-19th March 2015
Reporting Inspector Sister Susan Collins

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	230
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Wendy Jevon
Telephone number	01922 720063
E-mail address	postbox@st-patricks.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2010
DFE School Number	335/3304
Unique Reference Number	104233

Headteacher Mr Gregory Gilroy

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 2

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one 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 three full RE lessons, one with the headteacher and two with the subject leader.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held three discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, staff, the parish priest and a local deacon.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass and assembly, observed three prayer services 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, and teachers' planning, were read alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- St Patrick's is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Patrick in Walsall.
- St Patrick's school is in an area of social deprivation.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 46%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 63%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Attainment on entry is well below the national average overall.

Main Findings

- St Patrick's is a school in which the Catholic life, collective worship and religious education are good and pupils' contribution to Catholic life is outstanding.
- All members of staff and governors are totally committed to the Catholic nature of the school. They clearly know the strengths of the school and are taking action to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- All members of the school community are involved in informal processes for monitoring Catholic life and more formal processes are now being developed.
- The monitoring and evaluation of RE is a strength of the school which has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning in RE over the last eighteen months.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Self evaluation is an integral part of St Patrick's school in which senior leaders, staff and governors are all involved. Strengths of the school are identified but the document is overly descriptive in places and the processes used to monitor and evaluate not always clearly stated.
- The school judges the quality of its Catholic life correctly, mainly through informal processes. More formal processes are starting to be used; however, in order for this to be fully productive, audits need to be completed and time given to formalise priorities which will further develop the Catholic life of the school.
- Improvement planning is detailed with clear time scales; it needs to link more closely with the outcomes from self evaluation.
- The school's mission is at the heart of daily life and this contributes positively to the very good behaviour of all pupils witnessed during the inspection. There are opportunities for reflection on the mission in some classes; this practice needs to be developed across the whole school.
- Senior leaders report regularly both informally and formally to the governors focusing on the impact of their work and how this improves the outcomes for all pupils. The subject leader presented a detailed report to all governors in February of this year and the headteacher includes a section in his report to governors on Catholic life.
- Children contribute to the evaluation process through surveys and the school council. They know that their views are important and they are able to evaluate the impact of their involvement in the Catholic life. The school council helped to design the school's prayer garden.
- Parents are invited to share their views through parents' meetings and regular questionnaires; this practice could be strengthened by including questions about Catholic life and RE.
- The school has in place effective systems which support the varying needs of the pupils whilst raising their educational standards and aspirations.
- The RE curriculum has been customised to meet the needs of pupils and provides very good opportunities for spiritual and moral development. In order to improve the curriculum, further opportunities for promoting vocational development need to be planned across the school.
- Collective worship is monitored regularly by the subject leader and staff have appreciated the advice and support they have been given to improve the quality of acts of worship.
- Pupils are involved in both the planning and delivery of collective worship and where they have been supported by the subject leader, they are highly confident in sharing God's word with younger pupils.

Governance

- The governing body has a significant role within the school. They are committed to supporting the staff; appreciating the improvements that have been made in particular within teaching and learning, and recognise that this is largely due to the work of the headteacher and subject leader.

- Governors are well informed about the strengths of the school because of their regular visits, their involvement in learning walks, regular meetings with senior staff and subject leader and from the quality of information they receive regularly from the school.
- In their determination to secure further improvement the governors provide appropriate support and challenge senior leaders. They are mindful of their responsibility to provide a solid Catholic foundation and do everything possible to ensure that staff appointments will enhance the Catholic life of the school.
- Additional governors have been appointed in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection. These governors have considerable expertise, a high level of commitment and they are involved in all aspects of governance.
- The link governor for RE, who is also a subject leader herself in a neighbouring school, works very closely and effectively with the subject leader. She is well informed about teaching and learning in RE and reports her findings to the governing body.

Religious Education

- The school's judgement that teaching, learning and assessment in RE are good can be validated as reliable.
- The headteacher and subject leader work closely together to monitor provision and provide valuable support to staff in several ways but in particular, in developing their subject knowledge. This is a strength of the school.
- Effective procedures and systems are in place to monitor and evaluate current practice in RE. Joint lesson observations are carried out by the headteacher and subject leader and moderated by an external consultant. Book trawls and discussions with pupils support the evaluation of teaching and learning. Since the subject leader has been in post, the proportion of good lessons has increased over time.
- Staff are given individual feedback after monitoring has taken place. Key messages are shared with all staff and senior leaders identify further support required. Action is taken promptly where improvement is needed.
- Staff requested training to improve their subject knowledge and support with moderating RE work and the inset provided has impacted on teaching and learning. Staff are well supported by senior leaders.
- Assessment procedures in RE have improved, staff are now working on using data to inform planning.
- The school has been creative in finding ways of enhancing provision, seminarians from the nearby parish come into school weekly to support the pupils' learning and a teaching assistant who has the Catholic teacher's certificate is being used to strengthen the teaching.
- Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires and discussions. They enjoy all their RE lessons because they work in a variety of different ways. To seek their views further, the school might include a question which asks the children to reflect on what they think could be done to improve Catholic life or teaching and learning in RE.
- The RE curriculum is broad and balanced and based on the curriculum strategy, *Learning and Growing as the People of God* and is accessible to all.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- Attainment in RE is low on entry to school, but progress for all groups is good for the majority and pupils learn quickly about the faith.
- Children make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that their work is mainly in line with diocesan expectations and standards in Key Stage 2 are broadly in line.
- The quality of teaching is improving across the school as a result of high quality inset and the support that non Catholic members of staff receive from the subject leader.
- All teaching in RE is good or better. Pupils make very good progress where teaching is outstanding because they are actively involved in their learning, the questioning is challenging, the children are required to reflect at a deeper level and make links with other passages from scripture and their everyday lives.
- Assessment procedures have improved as staff are more confident in assessing work in line with diocesan expectations. Gap task marking is extending and developing pupils' learning.
- The RE curriculum is carefully planned and all members of staff seek ways to support and enrich the curriculum so that all pupils make consistent progress across the school.
- The majority of the children contribute significantly to the Catholic life of the school by taking on leadership roles and enjoy being "God's little helpers." This is an outstanding feature of the school.
- Provision for collective worship is very good with the celebration of the weekly Mass a central part of school life. Children respond enthusiastically and act with reverence.
- Pupils are keen to take on their roles in preparing and leading acts of worship including leading the Wednesday Word at lunchtime.
- The prayer life of the school is enhanced by 'Pray as You Go', a daily feature of school life where all pupils respond positively in their private prayer journal.
- Parents are encouraged to pray with their children in regular stay and pray sessions and this is helping to develop links between home and school.
- The sacramental programme is carefully planned and sixth form students from the nearby feeder secondary school enhance provision by their regular input.
- Children understand the importance of the school mission and they thrive in the strong Catholic ethos which is evident throughout the school.

Recommendations

The school should:

- Ensure that teaching in RE is consistently good or better in all lessons.
- Continue to provide professional development for members of staff to extend their knowledge of the faith and support them in the teaching of RE.
- Promote a whole school focus on pupils' vocational development.

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.



March 2015

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

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, March 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 Patrick's is a Catholic school where both RE and Catholic life are good. They are led effectively because of the leadership of the headteacher, very well supported by his deputy and the subject leader. They are assisted in their work by a committed, unified team. The governors are committed in their support of the staff and appreciate the work that they do every day in bringing the faith alive. Catholic life and collective worship are good. The children's contribution to the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. When pupils first arrive in school many have limited religious knowledge but, as a result of the teaching, they make good progress. Those needing additional support also achieve very well through a creative approach to their learning and effective support from the teaching assistants. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning in RE and, because of the way some inspirational members of staff teach them, they wish to help younger pupils understand more clearly about their faith. The introduction of 'Pray as you go' has impacted very positively on pupils' spiritual life and learning in RE.

I have recommended that the school should continue to ensure that teaching in RE is consistently good or better in all lessons; that all members of staff are given the support they need to teach the faith through good quality professional development; and that the school should promote pupils' vocational development across the school.

It was a pleasure to inspect your school because every member of the school community, staff, children and governors were all very welcoming and keen to share what makes St Patrick's school such a special place. The children were very well behaved and they fully participate in the school's Catholic life and love to worship and pray together. They are a credit to their school, their families and all those who care for them.

Yours sincerely,

Sister Susan Collins
Diocesan Inspector



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Diocesan Education Service