



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Part of the Dominic Barberi Multi-Academy Company

Curbridge Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 5JZ

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Inspection dates	24 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
Reporting Inspector	Brenda Beale

Diocesan Inspection carried out with the framework used for s48 inspections

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Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	186
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Clare McGrane
Telephone number	01993 702480
E-mail address	ourladyoflourdes@dbmac.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2011
DFE School Number	931/3822
Unique Reference Number	139527

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Jennifer Walker</b>
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Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2

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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 2 full and 1 part RE lessons with the subject leader.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the RE link member of the academy committee, staff, and parish priest.
- The inspector observed a Mass, assembly, prayer service 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, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self-evaluation.

## **Information about the school**

- Our Lady of Lourdes is a one form Catholic primary school serving the two parishes in Witney
- It is part of the Dominic Barberi Multi-Academy Company comprising one secondary school and six primary schools
- Witney is an area of predominately private and some council housing with some social deprivation.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 61%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 28%
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 6.2%. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities is low as are those receiving pupil premium.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

## **Main Findings**

- Our Lady of Lourdes judges its Catholic life and RE to be to be good with some outstanding elements. This judgement is wholly reliable as it is based on the school's excellent self-evaluation processes that are both rigorous and thorough. These processes demonstrate the some elements of both Catholic life and RE are outstanding but that nothing is less than good.
- Committed leadership by the principal who seeks to enable and develop staff has led to excellent deployment of staff and the formation of a strong leadership team. Proof of the school's commitment to RE and Catholic life is clearly shown by the highly competent RE leader's position on the senior leadership team.
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation and the care and time given to inform and support new and non-Catholic teachers, both in the Catholic life of the school and RE, ensure positive outcomes for pupils' spiritual and moral development and very good levels of progress and attainment in RE. Capacity to improve is very good.

- Improvement planning is based on thorough monitoring, detailed feedback and accurate evaluation and is characterised by clear priorities and success criteria, regular review and appropriate support to ensure plans are realised.
- Parish and school are increasingly seeking to work closely together. The school strives to involve parents and carers, to ensure community cohesion and very good spiritual, moral and vocational development for all members of the school community.

## **School self-evaluation**

### **Catholic life and collective worship**

- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and worship is very good.
- Leaders and governors show an unwavering commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school. This is affirmed by their decision to become part of the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company.
- A range of robust monitoring and evaluation activities (questionnaires, pupil and parent interviews, audits, environment learning walks) take place on a regular basis. The school's most recent questionnaire showed that 100% of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that their children were receiving a good Catholic education.
- A full and very comprehensive report on the Catholic life of the school is submitted to the Parish AGM. As part of termly RE staff meetings, collective worship, prayer tables and the Catholic life of the school are reviewed and training opportunities provided, together with individual support from the RE leader, principal and parish priests who also run a drop-in clinic to support staff on an individual basis. Following annual staff questionnaires to assess strengths and support requirements, a programme of professional development is implemented for staff annually.
- Performance management objectives for both teaching and non-teaching staff relate to the promotion of the Catholic life of the school. Each class teacher has an appraisal target for attainment in prayer for their cohort.
- The worship life of the school is judged by the school to be good with outstanding elements. This reliable judgement is based on thorough monitoring and expert knowledge of excellent school worship. Children, parents, staff and governors are involved in reviewing Masses and other acts of worship. Children have opportunities to plan, deliver and evaluate liturgy.
- Excellent handbooks on collective worship have been devised and are provided for both staff and parents. Teachers are given an induction leaflet and catechist's book when they join the school, in order to help them make a smooth transition into the ethos of the school.
- Progression in prayer is carefully monitored; all year groups have an appropriate list of prayers with which they should be familiar. Every class has a set of prayer books to inform both pupils and adults.
- Improvement planning for Catholic life and RE is an integral part of the school improvement plan and runs through all other four priorities but has a priority in its own right.

## Governance

- Governors promote the Catholic life of the school. In 2015, their Governor Award was linked to an RE-themed home-learning opportunity on the subject 'He is Risen'. The RE link governor monitors and evaluates by liaising with the RE leader, meeting three times a year, as well as meeting with the principal.
- The school committee RE link member is sent the subject action plan, which is read alongside the improvement plan twice termly, first when it is written and then again, when reviewed. The whole academy committee is also sent a termly evaluation, charting the school's progress against its targets.
- As part of a recent review process the school committee members decided that despite tight budgetary requirements it would continue the provision of the *Wednesday Word* because of the beneficial impact it had on the pupils' moral and spiritual development.

## Religious Education

- The school has accurately judged that nothing less than good can be found in the way the RE leader monitors and evaluates her subject but there is much evidence of outstanding practice. She is highly knowledgeable, meticulous, rigorous and detailed in her monitoring and evaluation.
- She provides extensive and outstanding support for all staff and keeps the principal and school committee members extremely well informed.
- Pupils are tracked over three units a year, usually following a four-year cycle of assessment strands. From each assessed unit, exemplars of work are collected and form a portfolio. Class teachers write a brief case study of one child to support their assessment.
- Pupils' attainment is reviewed each term by the RE Leader and feedback given to class teachers in pupil progress meetings; detailed analysis is also carried out at the end of each year.
- Review and evaluation of the RE action plan takes place termly in order to feed into the SIP and the following term's plan. Recent professional development has taken place on assessment including levelling and developing thinking skills.
- Teaching and learning in RE is very carefully monitored and its impact on improvement is considerable. The RE leader has supported individual teachers, especially those new to the school or particular year groups.
- Non-negotiables have been introduced and are monitored termly. A support plan would be put in place for those who do not meet them.
- Lesson monitoring takes place in all classes at least twice a year by the RE leader and/or the principal, complemented by learning walks and drop-ins. Book trawls take place three times a year (Autumn, Spring, Summer). Individual feedback is given to each teacher following observations, planning and book trawls and an overview is shared with staff and governors.

## Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>

- The large majority of children across the school are working at or above diocesan expectations. Within each year group, and over the course of an

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

academic year, increasing numbers of children reach expectations. Baseline evidence indicates that 'most' children have little knowledge of faith on entry to school, but by Year 6 very good progress has been secured.

- Across the school, EAL children perform in line with the rest of their cohort and in some classes slightly better. Over the past two years, the school's intake of EAL children has greatly increased, with an average of 30% of Foundation Stage and Year 1, being children who have English as an Additional Language.
- Children build on previous learning and develop new knowledge and skills. The local secondary schools have commented on the excellent subject knowledge of previous Year 6 pupils. Progression in knowledge of the scripture is particularly good.
- Teachers of RE, including non-Catholics, have an appropriate subject knowledge of RE. Teachers' confidence and requirements are audited by a questionnaire in September of each year so that support and training can be put in place as required.
- Teaching is predominantly good with some excellent features such as the quality of questioning or the use of personal experiences and parishioners to support children's learning in Key Stage 1. At the beginning of the year, teaching assistants are strategically placed in classes to support the teaching and learning; for example in Year 3 the TA is also a catechist for Holy Communion.
- A wide range of teaching strategies is being employed to cater for pupils' individual learning styles. Higher order questioning and thinking skills strategies are used by all teachers; lesson observations show that all teachers value the teaching of RE and prepare thoroughly.
- Assessment is extremely thorough. Information is collected using a range assessment activities and data is carefully analysed. It is then used to inform planning.
- Teachers give appropriate verbal feedback to pupils during lessons and are able to modify lessons to correct misunderstandings. Learning outcomes are clearly displayed at the beginning of the lesson and recorded in the pupils' books.
- The way pupils contribute to the Catholic life of the school is extremely good. The school council exercises its role responsibly in the life of the school. This council has now changed to 'Mini Vinnies' which is a youth version of St Vincent De Paul Society; this was suggested by the parish SVP.
- Through pupil voice and Mini Vinnies (historically the school council) the children have a significant input into the evaluation of the Catholic life of the school; their viewpoints and ideas are used as the basis of the action plan.
- All pupils are involved in fundraising, service to the parish and the wider community and have a good understanding that they are called to be stewards of God's creation.
- Children fully understand what worship is about and are comfortable when praying with their school community. They understand there are different types of prayer - formal and informal - and know traditional prayers appropriate to their age. They fully join in with community prayers, reflect silently and thoughtfully, sing joyfully and understand that song is a form of prayer.
- The school provides the pupils with many and varied opportunities for prayer and worship which they enjoy and respond sensitively, respectfully and maturely. They respond well in parish, class and school Masses and enjoy taking an active role.

- Key Stage 1 children are prepared for the liturgy and given the opportunity to provide an item of creative learning which is used during the service. All Key Stage 2 classes now prepare their own class Mass, facilitated by their class teacher and parish priest. Year 6 Children are beginning to plan and lead the Gospel through *Wednesday Word*. Children in some classes are suggesting their own meditations.
- All classes helped to prepare their retreat liturgy and Masses with the support of the parish priest.
- The spiritual, moral and vocational development of the pupils is outstanding.
- Annual retreats give pupils a sense of God's love for themselves and others and how to relate well to others. *Wednesday Word* has helped pupils to be self-aware and deal well with their emotion in the light of the teachings of Jesus and our Gospel values.
- Pupils have secure values and faith, know how to distinguish right from wrong, understand forgiveness and reconciliation, and have the courage and strength to live by these values. They benefit from speakers, some of whom are vocational, who are invited into assemblies to talk to the children.
- Pupils anonymously ask theological questions, which help evolve their faith and understanding, through question boxes which are located on class prayer tables. Termly, the parish priest visits each class to provide answers.
- Teaching based on the Catholic Pupil Profile has impacted well on the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

### Recommendations

Further develop and embed the sharing of good practice with other schools in the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company and in particular:

- moderation of pupils' work;
- enrichment of the curriculum;
- learning walks;
- Catholic life and worship experiences.



December 2015

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

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary, 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November 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.

- The Catholic life, worship and RE of Our Lady of Lourdes are good with some outstanding features, with nothing less than good being found. The leadership of the principal and her senior team is very good.
- They regularly and thoroughly monitor and evaluate all aspects of Catholic life and RE and effectively plan and implement improvement.
- They are continuously seeking to provide the very best opportunities for your children's spiritual, moral and vocational development.
- The governors are fully supportive of the requirements and priorities of leading a Catholic school. They have high expectations. Catholic life and collective worship in the school are very strong.
- The pupils are proud of their school and feel safe and happy. The children enjoy their learning and make at least good and more often outstanding progress. Attainment in RE is very good.
- RE is very effectively led by a highly competent subject leader.
- Pupils experience a rich and interesting curriculum, nothing less than good teaching, and an excellent worship and liturgical life which all go to ensure extremely good spiritual, moral and vocational development.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of prayer and the impact it has on their lives and those around them. They fully understand what is required to live out the Christian life.
- The Catholic life of the school is a top priority and the respect and care the children show each other and all within the community is unmistakeable.

I have recommended that the school further develops opportunities to share good practice with the other schools in the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company.

I would like to thank your children for the welcome and courtesy they showed me during my time in the school. Thank you for the support you give your child and the school

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale  
Diocesan Inspector