



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GILES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Charles Street, Cheadle, Staffordshire

Inspection dates	15 th - 16 th March 2016
Reporting Inspector	Mr Dominic Collins

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	206
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mr John Pennington
Telephone number	01538 753220
E-mail address	office@st-giles.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2011
DFE School Number	860 3459
Unique Reference Number	138724
Headteacher	Mrs Alexandra Beardmore
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2



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 2 part RE lessons with senior leaders.
- 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 chair of the board of directors, CEO of the MAC, the headteacher, RE subject leader, school lay chaplain, parish priest and parents.
- The inspector observed 3 examples of collective worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of teaching and learning in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- Other documents related to the school's self evaluation such as school development planning and minutes of relevant meetings, teachers' planning and RE assessment systems were also examined.

Information about the school

- St Giles is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Giles in Cheadle.
- The school is part of the Painsley Catholic Academy, a Multi Academy Company (MAC) formed in September 2012, working with five other primary schools and one secondary school.
- The chair of the board of directors is a national leader of governance; the chief executive, who is head of the secondary school, is a national leader of education.
- The parish is situated in an area of predominantly private housing, with the social and economic backgrounds of the majority of families falling within a typical national range.
- The school currently has 206 pupils on roll of whom 62% are baptised Catholics.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is well below the national average.
- St Giles School has undergone significant change during this academic year. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and the RE leader / deputy headteacher, assistant head, reception and Year 2 teacher are also recent additions to the staff.
- The school is proud of its achievements in a number of nationally accredited awards including, Primary Science Silver Quality Mark, Full Dyslexia Status and Leading Parent Partnership Award.

Main Findings

- St Giles school self evaluation correctly judges the overall effectiveness of its Catholic life and religious education to be good.
- This judgement is reliably based upon a broad range of effective monitoring processes, thus providing a secure profile of quality assurance.
- Improvement planning is focussed and prioritised as a result of the realistic and accurate analysis of evaluation outcomes. As a consequence the school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.
- The governing body provide effective support and are fully involved in the Catholic life and spiritual direction of the school. They work closely with the school

leadership and staff and together form a powerful combination with a shared vision to drive the school forward.

- St Giles is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong Catholic identity and outstanding Catholic ethos, where pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in their faith journey.

School self evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Outcomes from self evaluation lead the school to judge its Catholic life as good.
- Inspection evidence confirms this view, as school evaluation is securely based upon a developing cycle of effective monitoring and evaluation processes that are thorough, informative and consistently applied.
- Crucially, these outcomes form the basis of a comprehensive development plan that is broken down into specific focus areas. These include action relating to building upon existing strengths in addition to those in need of review and improvement.
- The school leadership perceives self evaluation as implicit in the drive towards continuous school improvement and successfully utilises a process of regular reflective enquiry which is fully integrated with its development planning.
- Evaluation is predicated on a thorough knowledge and awareness of the school and its mission that is shared, practised and understood by the school community.
- The effective whole school approach to monitoring and evaluating the 'every child matters' agenda, characterises the commitment of the school to addressing the principles of its mission that serves as a constant point of reference for continuing development and quality assurance.
- The school leadership is passionate about developing the Catholic life and has taken swift action to conduct a thorough audit in order to evaluate a profile of the school's existing strengths and areas deemed in need of review. As a consequence, there is strong evidence that systems used for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school are developing. The school environment has been enhanced, prayer areas around the school have been improved following staff training and a policy for collective worship reviewed.
- The information derived from this structured approach to monitoring Catholic life is used effectively by the school leadership to make secure evaluations of the impact it has on pupils' attitudes, relationships, sensitivity and awareness to others.
- The spiritual direction of the school strives to provide the best possible outcomes for all pupils. This vision is shared by a dedicated staff team and supportive directors, governors, who place the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as their highest priority.
- The board of directors' mission and strategy committee has a remit to monitor and develop the Catholic ethos of the multi-academy. The opportunities therefore to share and develop good practice and successful planning strategies, present a valuable dimension in a drive towards outstanding overall effectiveness.
- Prayer and collective worship is central to the life of the school and is nourished by the example and commitment of all members of staff, who go to great lengths to make their times of reflection, peaceful and meaningful by using appropriate audio and visual resources for example.
- A high quality attractive prayer focus is prominent in every classroom and is regularly changed to reflect the liturgical calendar.

- Pupils' response to collective worship is very positive. They are attentive and reverent in prayer and understand the importance it has in their daily lives.
- In addition to the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by senior staff, pupils' views are sought and valued. They are invited to complete a personal response and reflection for Mass, assembly or a special prayer service, which they proudly display in their RE journal.
- The quality of collective worship is fully enhanced through the high quality support the lay chaplain offers each school across the MAC. This takes the form of working with staff and children in order to support the planning and evaluation of the liturgy.

Governance

- Governors are committed to the school and its Catholicity. They have a clear understanding of how the school witnesses to Christ and fulfil all of their responsibilities in evaluating its work and ethos.
- There is clear evidence that governors make a significant contribution to self evaluation. They are well organised and kept fully informed through their frequent visits to the school and receiving detailed termly reports from the mission and strategy committee and headteacher.
- Governors are appropriately involved in the preparation and monitoring of RE improvement planning, which is a priority within school development.
- The governors are able to offer a high level of expertise and are in a position to recognise the quality of the school's achievements in RE. They are very supportive of the headteacher and all the staff and encourage all they do, while at the same time offering an appropriate level of professional challenge in order to sustain improvement.
- In accordance with governor policy, all new staff are fully inducted in their roles and responsibilities in the Catholic life of the school.
- Governors recognise the importance of ensuring that professional development is provided to maintain their effective governance and the needs of staff, pupils and whole school priorities.

Religious Education

- School self assessment is accurate in its judgement that pupils make consistently good progress in their faith journey throughout the school. Evidence from the inspection confirms this view as reliable and fully justified.
- This judgement is based upon the outcomes of a variety of formal and informal processes used by the RE subject leadership to monitor provision and outcomes.
- The school is alert to the need for the regular examination of systems used to monitor quality assurance in RE and this is a work in progress.
- The recently appointed headteacher has conducted a comprehensive review of current monitoring and evaluation practice and how outcomes form the basis of further development planning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is a constant focus within the evaluation cycle. RE lessons are monitored at least annually by senior leadership, following an agreed profile. Evidence confirms that feedback to staff is developmental and receptive; support and guidance is always included where appropriate.

- In addition, the scrutiny of lesson planning, assessment of pupils' work in RE, class discussion, pupil voice and focussed learning walks, give a clear and reliable insight into the quality of RE provision and the impact of teaching on pupil learning.
- Inspection evidence confirms that all monitoring in RE is linked to school improvement priorities. The developmental needs identified as a result of the evaluation process, discussed and shared by all staff and governors, feature as a priority for future planning.
- The school is successful in developing the practice of self evaluation because it is directly centred on sharing outcomes and agreeing appropriate action.
- The RE curriculum follows the diocesan curriculum strategy. The school leaders gives close attention to monitoring and evaluating the quality of planning and strategies used to deliver the key elements, thus ensuring that all pupils can access the curriculum.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- Pupils' attainment in RE, relative to the evidence of baseline assessment on entry, is generally very good and is commensurate to the momentum and quality of their progress.
- The most recent assessments confirm that the majority of pupils are working at or above expected standards across each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, overall attainment levels are high and compare favourably with pupils' performance and standards in literacy.
- These outcomes reflect the development of effective pupil tracking and monitoring and the high standard of RE teaching that is characterised by stimulating and well matched activities which make lessons interesting and enjoyable.
- Learning is further enhanced by the excellent quality of relationships throughout the school and the positive guidance given by classroom support staff that enable all pupils to engage fully. Pupils make good progress due to the focussed support given to match their particular needs.
- RE provision is enriched by opportunities for children to benefit from and contribute to a variety of high quality religious experiences, such as a residential retreat for older pupils and helping with the organisation of charity fund raising. They are also encouraged to use their gifts and talents to serve the wider community.
- Excellent transition activities to promote spiritual life are also arranged in liaison with Painsley Catholic College.
- An appropriate range of assessments to support learning are built into lesson planning although success criteria are in the early stages of development.
- The good teaching of RE has a very positive impact on pupil learning and progress. This is evidenced by the quality of pupils' written work in their RE books, which they perceive as 'special' and the way they are able to talk confidently about what they have learnt.
- Marking is used consistently to encourage pupils and inform them of their progress; they receive good quality feedback and guidance of how to improve further. Evidence of pupils' work linked to the quality of marking acknowledges spiritual as well as academic progress.

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.

- Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school and is nourished by the example and commitment of all members of staff; pupils respond with enthusiasm and reverence.
- Strong links are established between the school and parish. Pupils' sacramental preparation is well organised and is centred on an excellent partnership between home, school and parish. The parish priest and parish catechists also lead family meetings.
- The school benefits from the excellent services of a lay chaplain. Her involvement in promoting pupils' enjoyment of RE is particularly effective, confirmed by their eagerness to participate in the voluntary RE extracurricular activities she organises on a weekly basis.
- Prayer and collective worship make a powerful contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and reflects the strong Catholic character of the school.
- The pupils have a clear understanding of its values and mission 'grow in faith and love' and they are guided, on a daily basis, by caring and vigilant staff who monitor the way they embrace it. Consequently St Giles is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school and its excellent ethos ensures that every pupil is valued and fully integrated into the school community.
- The school has developed effective processes for monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life and religious education, this process of continuous improvement has a very positive impact on the outcomes for its pupils and reflects the commitment, drive and vision of its leaders.

Recommendations

- Develop further opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of different world religions.
- Building upon existing good practice, expand opportunities to involve pupils in planning and leading collective worship and musical ministry.



March 2016

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

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Giles Catholic Primary School, 15th & 16th March 2016

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 Giles School provides a very good Catholic education for its pupils. This judgement is based upon findings from accurate and robust self evaluation and is fully justified by evidence obtained during the inspection. The school has a strong Catholic ethos. Through the care and encouragement your children receive from the strong leadership of the headteacher with the full support of her staff, the pupils enjoy school and develop as happy eager learners.

Well planned and effective teaching in RE and a rich, stimulating curriculum enable your children to make very good progress in religious education and in their continuing faith journey. The Catholic mission of the school underpins all aspects of its daily life and the evidence of their spiritual and moral development is demonstrated by the way pupils embrace it. The school is very well supported by an enthusiastic and committed governing body and parish priest, all with a shared vision to provide the best possible Catholic education for its pupils. The governors and the board of directors know the school well and provide excellent support within the context of the multi-academy company.

In order to broaden learning in RE, I have recommended that the school should:

- develop further opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of different world religions.
- Build upon existing good practice to expand opportunities to involve pupils more in planning and leading collective worship and musical ministry.

It was a pleasure to inspect St Giles School and share how much your children enjoy their learning. I enjoyed my visit very much and was made most welcome by all. Your children are a credit to the school, to their families and all who care for them.

Yours sincerely

Dominic Collins
Diocesan Inspector