



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY FENTON

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Inspection dates 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
Reporting Inspector Mr Dominic Collins

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 – 11 years
Number on roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Annmarie Comfort
School address	Watkin Street Fenton Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Telephone number	01782 235385
E-mail address	ourlady@sgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2009
DFE School number	861 3411
Unique Reference Number	140287

**Principal** **Miss Dawn Lee**

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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 3 full RE lessons, 2 with the subject leader. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the chair of governors, parish priest, staff and parents. He observed a school Mass, a Foundation Stage 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. He looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about Catholic life which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

## Information about the school

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013, Our Lady's Primary School became part of a multi-academy company, All Saints Catholic Collegiate, which consists of four local primary schools and the local high school. It is therefore now known as, Our Lady's Catholic Academy. The school is one form entry situated in an area of significant deprivation and serves the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Fenton. There are currently 228 pupils on roll of whom 46% are baptised Catholics. The majority of pupils are white British, with 29% of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Currently 53 pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding; 12% of pupils have a special educational need and of those two pupils have statements. Recently, the school has undergone a significant staffing restructure, including the establishment of a new senior leadership team and RE subject leader. The current principal took up post in September 2013 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. National and local accreditation awarded to the school includes International School Award, Healthy School Award and Eco School Award.

## Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school judges the overall effectiveness of its Catholic life and RE to be good, providing pupils with a high quality religious education that enables them to follow Christ and live out their faith in action. Evidence obtained during the inspection process confirms that these judgements are fully justified. School self evaluation presents an accurate appraisal of the quality of its Catholic life and RE provision correctly identifying areas of strength and those in need of review. As a result this has provided a firm foundation for school improvement planning and future development. The recently appointed principal gives clear directional guidance to the newly formed leadership team. It is evident that refinements already made to existing practice and new systems that have already been introduced by the RE subject leader are beginning to have a positive effect, leading towards the development of more robust monitoring and development procedures. Governors and parish priest work effectively with the school and have a significant input

into the evaluation of its Catholic life and RE in order to ensure the best possible outcome for pupils.

### **School self evaluation**

School self evaluation rightly judges that pupil attainment and progress in religious education is good. The school has developed its own baseline assessment which indicates that the majority of pupils have limited experience of religious practice or spiritual awareness on entry. They receive a positive start to their faith journey and make encouraging progress evidenced by current monitoring systems, for example; end of unit assessments, work recorded in RE books, pupil discussions and interviews. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are working at or above expected levels in RE and by Year 6, the large majority of pupils are working within or above diocesan levels of attainment. However, the comparison is not based on the national assessment levelling procedures and the school recognises that monitoring and assessment systems need to be refined in line with diocesan guidelines. As a consequence, in order to raise attainment this area features as a key priority in the school improvement plan, to include staff development training given by the diocese. This forms part of a comprehensive 'pupil tracking' action plan, devised by the subject leader, brought about through accurate school self evaluation, that also includes a focus on improved marking strategies, assessment portfolios of levelled work and pupil target setting for all learners.

Self evaluation judges that pupils' response to Catholic life and collective worship is good. This view is accurate based on a range of evidence, for example; response from pupil interviews, their enthusiasm for organising and contributing to regular fund raising and charity appeals, and by the positive way pupils relate to each other, with respect and sensitivity. Pupil behaviour and attitudes are excellent because the school places high priority on reconciliation and forgiveness, when appraising pupil responses to Catholic life. A range of formal and informal systems are in place that give governors a firm insight into the school's strengths and areas to develop. A dedicated RE team, comprising chair of governors, parish priest and RE subject leader has been established to monitor, evaluate and develop action plans in order to promote the Catholic life of the school. Through this process and by their regular presence at school Mass and assemblies, governors are able to monitor how the school promotes the spiritual development of all pupils, thus enabling them to exercise their responsibilities effectively.

The provision of and pupil response to, Catholic worship, is regularly audited and evaluated by the RE subject leader and all staff, formally and informally through observation, review and pupil voice. Both are judged by the school to be good. Evidence of the quality and range of opportunity for prayer and worship and the manner in which pupils respond, observed during the inspection, fully endorses their judgement.

The quality of RE teaching is judged by the school to be good. Good and some outstanding teaching were observed during the inspection. RE lesson observation records also confirm a level of consistency over time and show that constructive feedback is shared with staff in a professional manner. There is clear evidence to show that the quality of pupils' learning from RE lessons, assemblies and Masses is good and fully justifies the

school findings from self evaluation. High expectations for learning are shared by all staff who together are striving to further improve pupil learning to be outstanding. For example; a drive in developing the quality of feedback to inform pupils of the next steps to improve their work is under way. The RE leader and literacy leader, conduct fortnightly book scrutinies to ensure that standards continue to improve and the quality of work in RE books is the same as work recorded in literacy books. Lesson planning is also reviewed half termly by the RE subject leader to ensure progression.

Systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE has been a major focus of school self evaluation and a comprehensive review has been made of current practice. Findings are accurate and the school acknowledges the need to focus on developing procedures that will improve the use of assessment to support pupil learning. The school has already acted swiftly and appropriate plans have already been put into place by the RE subject leader. Although this is work in progress, the impact of action taken is already having a significant effect.

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

Outcomes for pupils in RE are good. The evidence of assessment data and the level of work recorded in RE books, demonstrates a consistent momentum of progress in their knowledge and understanding of the Faith, across each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is within Diocesan expectations and progress made from a low RE baseline on entry, is particularly good. Attention is given to ensure that standards in RE and literacy compare favourably. Through the use of level descriptors, to raise attainment in RE, the fresh approach to streamlining pupil tracking, devised by the subject leader, will accelerate the progress of more able pupils. Through self evaluation, this area has been identified for review and action to address it is already under way.

The contribution pupils make to the school's Catholic life and collective worship and the extent to which they benefit from them are excellent. Catholic life is a strength of the school and has a profound impact on pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. The extremely positive school ethos results in happiness, unity and mutual respect. Relationships at all levels are excellent. Pupils are aware that they can make a difference to those in need, through prayer and deed. They generously contribute and help to organise regular fund raising initiatives to support the work of local charities and the global work of CAFOD.

Pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of their faith and are able to relate their own daily lives to the way Jesus lived. Provision for collective worship is excellent and is central to the life of each school day. There are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray and reflect together. Children are at ease when praying and they are confident in sharing their prayers and intercessions with others. Pupils enjoy taking part in the 'Wednesday Word' in school and at home and this enables them to reflect on the Gospel throughout the week. The parish priest visits the school frequently. He is known and loved by the children and provides the school and parish with excellent spiritual and pastoral support. Pupils

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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.

participate reverently to collective worship and eagerly respond to the weekly Mass celebrated in school, through the interactive approach of the parish priest. For example; The 'Journey of Faith Programme' has encouraged two staff members, three parents and fifteen children to become Catholics over the last two years.

Catholic life and collective worship is effectively monitored and evaluated and the school leadership and RE subject leader are constantly seeking ways to develop it further. There is clear evidence to confirm that the quality of teaching in RE is effective over time, with good and some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. Staff are very well supported by the senior leadership and RE subject leader. Induction procedures for new staff are thorough and an excellent document, produced by the RE leader, outlines aspects of school Catholic life, faith practices and points of reference. RE lessons are characterised by; good planning, clear learning objectives, good subject knowledge and a variety of well-matched learning tasks and teaching strategies. Pupils respond eagerly to good teaching and are engaged, interested, and thoughtful in their answers and opinions.

Children enjoy their RE lessons, because lessons are made interesting and purposeful. Behaviour is excellent and the children demonstrate a positive work ethic towards their learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' learning. The RE curriculum, based upon the diocesan strategy, is well led and managed by the RE subject leader and has been successfully adapted to meet the needs of all groups of learners. The RE curriculum is further enriched through the vibrant liturgical life of the school.

Our Lady's provides a good Catholic education where all pupils benefit from the high quality of its Catholic life. Under the clear directional guidance of the recently appointed principal the school is making very good progress, with a fresh vision and a shared opportunity within the new academy to build upon its current successes.

### **Recommendations**

Improve the use of assessment to support pupils' learning in religious education and inform staff about how pupils are achieving in relation to diocesan and national standards.



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November 2013

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Academy Fenton, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

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.

As a result of effective self evaluation, the school judges itself to be good in its Catholic life and RE provision. Evidence found during this inspection confirms this judgement to be fully justified.

Our Lady's Catholic Academy provides a good Catholic education for its pupils and has some outstanding features, particularly the strong Catholic ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. Relationships are excellent and pupils are encouraged to thrive in a happy and supportive environment. The Catholic life of the school has a powerful impact on the spiritual and moral development of its pupils and they benefit from the many opportunities they receive to contribute to its development. The children enjoy their RE lessons because of the consistent, high quality teaching they receive and as a consequence, make excellent progress. Provision for collective worship is good and the pupils respond to it very well.

The newly appointed principal communicates a clear vision for the school leading towards the continuing development of RE and the Catholic life. She is very well supported by a dedicated staff and supportive governors.

In order to broaden learning in RE, my recommendations are, that the school implements its well considered RE action plan, which is already work in progress, and particularly maintains its focus on assessment in religious education.

It was a pleasure to inspect Our Lady's Academy. 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 those who care for them.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Collins  
Diocesan Inspector