



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates 6th – 7th March 2012
Reporting Inspector Terry Dillon

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Fr Paul Devaney
School address	Lyttelton Road Stechford Birmingham B33 8BL
Telephone number	0121 675 784
E-mail address	barry.desmond@corpuschristi.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2009
DFE School number	330 3322
Unique Reference Number	103424

Headteacher **Barry Desmond**

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 evaluate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed two full RE lessons with the headteacher and one on his own. In addition, the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the chair of governors, who is the parish priest, the headteacher and the subject leader for RE. He observed a school Mass in the nearby church, two lunchtime prayer meetings and an assembly. He undertook a learning walk to look at 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 school's development plan, teachers' planning and assessment records. The inspector also evaluated the quality of the school's collective prayer life, evidence that will be shared ultimately with other Diocesan schools.

Information about the school

Corpus Christi is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of Corpus Christi in Stechford, Birmingham. Stechford is a mixed area of council and private housing in which social and economic deprivation is above the average. The proportion of Catholic pupils is currently 47% and that of ethnic minority pupils is 46%, of which 20% have English as a second language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities (SENDA). Attainment on entry is below the national average overall and in RE well below.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation Corpus Christi judges itself to be a good Catholic school which seeks to ensure that all pupils and staff benefit from the spiritual and moral values that underpin its Catholic mission. The evidence of the inspection is that the school has made the great strides forecast at the time of the previous inspection in 2009 and is an excellent Catholic school. The values espoused by the senior management team and the RE department reflect not only the desire but the determination to ensure that the school lives out its mission. It is well supported by its governors and the parish priest. The school sees itself as an integral part of its Catholic and its wider community and is doing exceptionally well in its endeavours to be an effective participant in both.

School self evaluation

The school's evaluation of its Catholic life is very carefully constructed. The senior management team, RE coordinator and parish priest carefully monitor the Catholic life of the school and the quality of collective worship. They discuss their findings so as to be able to engage the pupils as effectively as possible. Regular walks around the school and visits to classrooms are used to gauge the extent to which display reflects the school's Catholicity and how well the prayer corners, present in every room, serve the needs of the pupils. The outcomes are shared with all staff, adding to the generally strong Catholic ethos of the school. The lunchtime prayers which are led by Year 6 pupils are monitored by staff and their evaluations lead to their being able to guide the pupils in developing their skill in first reading and questioning

those in attendance before moving to linked prayers. As a result, the quality of those sessions is very good and is seen by the pupils who attend as worthwhile. Similarly, the staff observe the pupils entering and leaving Mass and how they respond during the liturgy. This has enabled them to ensure that pupils approach their prayers with appropriate devoutness, hands held together in prayer and a willingness to join in the responses and hymn singing at a good level. The school's recognition of the importance of these two areas, and of the need to continue their development, has led to it seeing them as priorities in its strategic planning. As a result, finance has been set aside to ensure that suitable resources are available. A further outcome of the school's evaluation is the intention to encourage more governors to visit and observe and so be in a position to draw the school's attention to any shortcomings.

Monitoring and evaluation of RE are of high quality and the outcomes are carefully recorded. The headteacher and the RE subject leader have a structured programme of gathering information about long- and short-term planning, about the quality of teaching and learning, and about pupils' progress that enables them to measure with reasonable accuracy how well pupils are achieving. As a result, they are able to identify steps to guide the development plan for RE for the coming year, a plan that could be further improved if it were setting more strategic priorities over a longer period than a year.

The RE subject leader has time built into her weekly programme to enable her to carry out the monitoring and evaluation of lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' written work and the oversight of teachers' planning. The headteacher supports her by giving some of his time to similar activity within RE. Together they form an impressive partnership that has made significant improvements to provision and outcome in RE since the previous inspection in 2009. The school has moved from a situation when much of what it did was judged to be satisfactory at that time to be able to state with confidence within its self-evaluation that the attainment of pupils is now good and that teaching and learning are also good. It rightly recognises that there is room for further improvement through the increasing use of extension activities for the pupils to aid them to reflect more on what they are learning. There was evidence of this shortcoming in one of the observed lessons, for example, where the opportunity to encourage pupils to reflect on 'riches' as being God's gifts, rather than being materialistic wealth, was missed. The evaluation forms scrutinised by the inspector showed a well-structured approach that would be improved with more prompts for aiding judgements on achievement and pupils' learning through the lessons. The inspector judged that the school's approach to assessment with its regular and consistent levelling of teachers' findings was excellent, and stronger than the school's own evaluation.

The evaluation of the RE curriculum has been carried out carefully and effectively and now provides an excellent experience for the pupils. A reappraisal of the school's work in response to a recommendation from the previous inspection to develop the school's own guidelines based upon the Diocesan *Curriculum Strategy* has led to a thorough review of the curriculum, its planning and the contribution that extra-curricular activities can make to pupils being able to internalise their learning. The written work observed by the inspector and the responses of pupils to his questions indicated a consistency in the delivery of the curriculum among the different year groups that reflects the positive outcome of its evaluation, whilst the school's use of pupil evaluation through annual questionnaires has enabled it to judge what the pupils find interesting and enjoyable in their RE experiences. The outcomes of evaluation have been reminders of the need for teachers to distinguish between the different abilities in each class; this has led to SENDA pupils usually

having good support and being helped to make good progress in relation to their abilities.

Governors also play a part in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. The chair of governors, the parish priest, is a regular visitor to the school and takes opportunities to observe lessons and religious practice. His written evaluations are informative and make useful suggestions on how what he has observed could be improved.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils are good in RE. Pupils attain good standards, increasing their knowledge of prayers as they move through the school, knowing the basic tenets of other Faiths and having a good understanding of Christ's teaching. This reflects the good progress that the pupils make through Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with SENDA make good progress through the different provision made for them and the good support they receive from classroom assistants. The response of pupils in lessons is mostly positive and they say they enjoy their learning in RE because of the stories they hear and the variety of tasks they are given. In the lessons observed, teachers used a variety of approaches to good effect and kept the pace of the lessons brisk.

Relationships throughout the school between teachers and pupils are excellent. There are clear indications of shared values based on the school's mission statement that is displayed in all the classrooms and known by the pupils. The approach of pupils to prayer life within the school is exceptional, with around 50 pupils attending each of the lunchtime prayer sessions observed during the inspection. The confidence with which Year 6 pupils led one of these sessions was impressive. Pupils' responses in Mass and their involvement in the readings and presentation indicated a respect that augurs well for their spiritual and moral development. They pray devoutly at the beginning of the school day, at lunchtime and at the beginning of RE lessons and follow the very good example set by their teachers. Their willing involvement in the school's other activities also supports their social and vocational development effectively.

Provision overall is least good and has some outstanding features. The good teaching leads to good achievement and learning. The excellent leadership of the head and the RE co-ordinator has resulted in high quality planning that recognises the different needs of the pupils, an excellent assessment system and supportive marking by the teachers. The curriculum has been updated and the sharing of good practice within the school has led to pupils learning with enjoyment in RE. Their introduction to the lives, cultures and beliefs of others in and beyond the school community will stand them in good stead as they develop within a multi-cultural society. Already, they are learning the benefits of contacts with others overseas who need their support.

Recommendations

The school has progressed well since the previous inspection and has need of no major recommendations. However, it would continue its improvement if it:

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.

- Ensured that the RE development plan was setting more strategic targets for improvement and over a longer period than does its present plan;
- Structured its evaluation forms to provide prompts for attainment and learning so that opportunities to extend pupils' reflective thinking were not missed.



Diocesan Education Service,
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March 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School,
March 2012**

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 school has made the great strides since the time of the previous inspection in 2009 and is now an excellent Catholic school. The values espoused by the senior management team and the RE department reflect not only the desire but the determination to ensure that the school lives out its Catholic mission. It is well supported by its governors and the parish priest. The school sees itself as an integral part of its Catholic and its wider community and is doing exceptionally well in its endeavours to be an effective participant in both. The pupils, around 50 per cent of whom are not baptised Catholics, enjoy being at the school and being involved in its Catholic life. On entry, many have very little religious knowledge but they make good progress and by the time they leave the school most pupils have attained good standards. They know a range of prayers, the basic tenets of other Faiths and have a good knowledge of Christ's teaching.

In order for the school to continue its good progress we have recommended that the RE development plan is devised so that it sets strategic targets for improvement over a longer period than it does at present, and that the evaluation forms used by staff when monitoring the school's work provide clear prompts for attainment and learning so that opportunities to extend pupils' reflective thinking are not missed

It was a pleasure and privilege to inspect the school and to see how well it is doing. I was welcomed by the staff and the pupils, some actually commenting on how much they liked my tie. I found the pupils to be committed and keen to do their best.

Yours sincerely

Terence Dillon
Diocesan Inspector