



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANDREW'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Windrush Close, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 8QL

Inspection dates 18th - 19th June 2014
Reporting Inspector Mrs Susan Shannon

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	257
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs L Galligan
Telephone number	0121 743 5675
E-mail address	office@standrews.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2009
DFE School Number	334/3501
Unique Reference Number	104099
Headteacher	Mr D Naughton
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	3



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, 4 RE lessons were jointly observed, 2 with the headteacher and 2 with the RE 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. She held meetings with the parish priest, who is also the link governor for RE and spoke to parents. She observed a whole school Mass, and a Year 6 prayer service and undertook a learning walk in Reception and Nursery to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan and RE action plan as well as assessment documentation and outcomes from any surveys and questionnaires.

Information about the school

St Andrew's is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Thomas More in Solihull. St Andrew's is in a mixed area of council and private housing, with an increasing number of pupils qualifying for free school meals and a below average deprivation indicator. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 96.7%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average while the number of children who have some learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Baseline evidence suggests that most pupils enter school with an average knowledge and understanding, with some achieving above average. At present all teachers are Catholic. The headteacher has been in post since September 2013.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation St Andrew's judges itself to be a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The evidence available during the inspection largely supports the accuracy of this judgement. However, at this early stage following the appointment of a new headteacher, the school's monitoring processes are not yet consistently applied with demonstrable outcomes and impact. Evaluation of that impact also needs to be consistently undertaken, shared and used to inform school improvement. As the focus of inspection in the diocese is on the quality of school self evaluation and the effectiveness of school procedures for monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning, the overall judgement is that, while St Andrew's is a good Catholic school, self evaluation requires improvement to be good. The Catholic life of the school is very strong as is pupil involvement in aspects of collective worship. The school's view of itself as good with outstanding features is accurate, but, in the case of religious education, is not reliably based on evidence gathered through school monitoring and evaluation. However, with a change in school and subject leadership this year, the school recognises the need to develop self evaluation. The school development plan shows coherent targets for developing monitoring and evaluation procedures and plans to incorporate RE in the pupil progress meeting from the autumn term will begin to enable effective monitoring of both teaching and outcomes in RE.

The school benefits particularly from the positive, continuing impact of the relationship with the parish priest/link RE governor, governing body, parish and parents. Leadership of religious education has great potential with an enthusiastic, spiritual RE leader now part of a senior leadership team. She has been liaising well with the local cluster schools and taking part in moderation exercises with them. The school judges leadership of RE to be good: elements of leadership are good but for a full validation of this judgement the school

needs to ensure a commitment to a formal process of whole school CPD, regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and its impact upon learning.

School self evaluation

The school judges itself to be good, with some significant outstanding elements. This is accurate in respect of Catholic life and collective worship but the basis for the judgement about religious education is not secure. The school's evaluation that its Catholic life and collective worship are outstanding is secure and well evidenced. Many pupils contribute significantly to the Catholic life of the school and benefit accordingly, as they themselves confirm. The school mission statement is at the centre of much of its daily life, behaviour is good and children are articulate and very proud of their school. Prayer features regularly in the daily life of the school; however, this could be further developed beyond the four prayers currently used for specific purposes. The subject leader and parish priest meet regularly to discuss Catholic life. While these meetings provide good evidence for planning of the next steps in the provision of liturgies, prayer opportunities and assemblies, extending the formal procedures and processes of self-evaluation and involving all of the senior leadership team on an annual review cycle would give a stronger evidential basis for improvement planning. The headteacher should be seen to be leading in the evaluation and feedback to staff, which could then be included on the agenda of governors' meetings benefitting a whole school view. There are at present no non-Catholic staff in the school and plans are in place to support the new and non-Catholic staff joining the school in September.

Collective worship is, rightly, judged as outstanding. The close work and support given by the parish priest plays a significant part here, as well as in the areas of Catholic life and wider pastoral involvement. Children and staff prepare and lead each weekly class Mass, with guidance by the parish priest. Parents respond in good numbers to the invitation to attend collective celebrations and comment upon the quality of collective worship: during the inspection a whole-school Mass. Pupils behaved with reverence and participated with enthusiasm, consistent with the school's self-evaluation. Collective worship is monitored by RE leader and parish priest, who discuss regularly the school's programme of assemblies and Masses.

The school evaluates religious education as good. However, as the school acknowledges, there is currently insufficient hard evidence of strong processes, outcomes and impact over time. The recent inclusion of the RE leader onto the senior leadership team should now enable the school development target for leaders to, 'monitor rigorously all aspects of their subject', to progress towards being securely embedded. The processes of monitoring and evaluation in RE now need to be planned into the school self-evaluation cycle for religious education to be good. A more rigorous monitoring plan needs to be in place in the summer term to guide and enable the new leadership team to sustain improvement. At present the school development plan lacks a target for improving the quality of teaching and learning in RE which other core subjects have.

Baseline evidence is collected at entry to nursery and reception. It needs to be evaluated at entry to reception and used to inform teaching and learning in the reception and to validate progress across the school effectively. Indications on the school self-evaluation that children enter the school with weak knowledge and understanding are presently based upon the nursery baseline level. Children are judged to be at or above diocesan expectations at Year 6 upon leaving. The data provided for children eligible for free school meals did not validate the premise that they are generally in line with other groups. School self-evaluation for achievement as good at the end of Key Stage 2 is accurate. The new tracking system which the school is planning to put in place should enable detailed analysis of progress and attainment and will help to provide stronger evidence for this in the future.

Lesson observations completed by the RE leader were carried out in the summer term for Years N,R,1 & 4. The headteacher observed the RE leader prior to the inspection. From this the school made their judgement that teaching over time is least good. The recorded results are shared with individual colleagues and targets given. Observations during the inspection did not validate this judgement in all classes, one outstanding lesson was observed. The teacher who covers many of the Key Stage 2 RE lessons was not in school to observe or talk to. No formal observation of this teacher has taken place.

Assessment procedures are in place and being carried out. There is some inconsistency in the monitoring and tracking of assessment. Pupils are assessed and monitored in a four year cycle of assessment strands. However, evaluation of the strands and units and the implications for teaching and learning are areas which are yet to be embedded. Books have been regularly marked, with one book trawl taking place. Effective evaluation of evidence found in the book scrutiny should now be fully embedded into the monitoring process to enable teachers to be fully informed of issues and actions needed. There is an inconsistency in formative marking and effective pupil feedback. Marking in books was not consistent in following the school's policy and did not always give pupils enough guidance to make the necessary corrections to their work and to challenge them. Procedures should be put in place to ensure the good practice used is adopted by all staff. All staff have been involved in a moderation of RE levels and evidence has been gathered as exemplars of work for each assessed unit.

Leadership and management are judged to be good in school self-evaluation. The RE link governor who is also the parish priest visits the school on a regular basis. He supports children and teachers in the preparation of class Masses, and has had some experience of learning walks and observations with the subject leader. The headteacher reports termly to governors on RE and has a vision of the nature of Catholic education, the importance of raising standards. The subject leader has a strong faith and a vision for the promotion of individual faith development for pupils and staff. She is fully committed to raising standards further within RE. One of the RE leader's performance management targets is linked to RE and the RE action plan reflects the RE targets in the school development plan. The headteacher is clear about the improvements needed, but actions taken since the previous inspection have not been effective in bringing about lasting improvements to pupils' achievement and progress across the school. The school development plan and performance management needs to have teaching and learning targets for RE in line with those for maths and English. The headteacher and subject leader have put in place monitoring and evaluation processes; however, the focus on shared evaluation in dedicated professional development needs to be implemented to enable an effective self-evaluation process. The process of tracking progress and evaluating and sharing findings is not yet fully embedded and requires improvement to be good.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes and provision for some pupils are good, though less so for others. Pupils make incremental progress through each key stage, and are developing their competence as learners. The quality of learning and progress in RE is broadly in line with expectations. However, the level of challenge is not always high enough and differentiation does not always match need. The close work and support given by the parish priest plays a significant part in the Catholic life, collective worship and wider pastoral involvement of the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is generally above national expectations for RE; by the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils work at diocesan levels of

¹ As the accuracy of the school self evaluation has been largely affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

attainment, so value added in the key stage is limited. Lessons are planned and can incorporate a range of resources that interest and engage the pupils. These include music, scripture and IT. All classrooms are well resourced and have both a prayer corner linked to the liturgical calendar and an RE display. Corridor displays celebrate pupils' work. There is strong evidence of pupils' willing involvement in support and work for charities and good causes, as well as the liturgical life of the school and parish. This develops pupils' awareness and understanding of community. The judgement of good for curriculum effectiveness was confirmed. The school regularly supports specific charities across a range of sectors

The subject leader has undertaken training offered by the diocese, works closely with the cluster schools and has termly meetings with the diocesan primary advisor. Teaching in RE is inconsistent with some that is satisfactory but some that is good or outstanding. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and some use a range of strategies, including IT, music, prayer and scripture, to secure engagement. However, pupils do not make progress in all lessons, especially where teaching strategies are limited and previous knowledge is not used to challenge. Sometimes pupils, are asked to complete tasks which are too easy and do not challenge them. High level questioning needs to be embedded using key questions linked assessment focuses to challenge all. The school is looking at ensuring teachers teach as much of their own RE as possible in the future and this will enable good consistent teaching in all classes.

All children benefit from the many opportunities offered to develop a maturing understanding of their faith. The school leads the sacramental preparation well and parents are happy with the understanding their children have. Some parents of First Holy Communion children stated that they would have liked to have had activities to do at home with their children to be more involved. Assessments in RE have been conducted on a regular basis for the last three years. Targets for RE have been introduced and put in children's exercise books. Books are marked regularly, and the school has a marking policy, but there is very little use of formative assessments to consolidate learning or support next steps. This does feature on the current development plan. Children can participate enthusiastically in RE lessons, where teaching is enthusiastic, challenging and well matched to prior knowledge. Spontaneous prayer is being introduced to extend the prayer vocabulary of the children. Pupils like RE and state that lessons are good when, 'We are doing something, find out something new or have to try hard.' When this type of teaching is not evident children are only partly engaged in RE lessons. They speak confidently about their faith: they enjoy school and feel safe and valued. They trust their teachers and say they work well as a team.

The Catholic life of the school is strong, with a clear ethos, modelled well by the subject leader. Commitment is evident across the school with all teachers being Catholic. Outside there is a prayer area which was used for the focus of the May procession this year. The school hall has had the addition of stained glass windows and a prominent mission statement which highlights its purposes as an area of prayer. Sacraments are celebrated through displays in prominent places, and the mission statement is displayed around the school in classes and corridors. There are opportunities for all pupils making sacramental preparation to go on retreat to Alton Castle. Pupils lead and contribute to fundraising and charity work, well documented in Catholic life folders. Pupils' involvement in the life of the Church is good, inside and outside school, especially at times of collective worship. During the weekly class Mass, pupils perform all the functions and duties not specific to the priest. Each class, on a rota basis, develops the content of the Mass, with a theme given by the priest who comes in prior to the Mass to support preparation. All Masses and prayer times are prayerful and reverent occasions.

Leadership in RE has the capacity to be outstanding and is a great strength for the school. This demonstrates good capacity for improvement. There is a clear sense of purpose, vision and direction which now needs to be shared at all levels. The link governor makes regular visits to the school to support the Catholic life of the school. He is aware that as a parish priest of a large parish his impact upon the monitoring of the RE curriculum is limited and is looking at ways of working closely with a governor from the curriculum committee to share the monitoring and evaluation cycle. Communication is also good and includes families and the wider community through meetings, letters, newsletters and occasional questionnaires. A new website is in place and there are plans develop the Catholic life section in order to engage the wider community.

Recommendations

- Ensure processes are in place to enable the subject leader to evaluate and feedback on the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment in RE.
- Ensure consistently good teaching across the school where teachers set tasks based up the assessment focuses to challenge children.
- Fully embed formative marking to enable children make improvements to their work.



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June 2014

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 Inspection of St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, 18th and 19th June 2014

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 Andrew's school has a good Catholic ethos and the level of care and encouragement your children receive from the headteacher and his staff allows them to develop as happy, confident learners. The children are fine ambassadors, are courteous and friendly and clearly take pride in their school. The prayer life within the school is good with the celebration of Mass being excellent. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and there is some very good teaching within the school. The children however, do not always make the good progress they could in their religious education due to some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Not all children make new learning in lessons and are not always challenged to do so. The school has plans which should remedy this in the next school year. The school is very well supported by an enthusiastic and committed RE leader as well as a passionate and effective parish priest. The governing body is well informed by the priest of the quality of prayer life within the school.

The school has begun to evaluate its provision and is working on ways of improving further the monitoring and evaluation of good teaching and learning within the school. The school has a good capacity to develop further, with an able RE leader and a new senior leadership team for the new academic year. I have recommended that the school fully embed processes to enable the subject leader to evaluate and feedback on the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment in RE, to ensure consistently good teaching across the school by challenging children in all lessons and to use marking to enable children make improvements to their work.

It was a pleasure to inspect St Andrew's school. 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,

Susan Shannon
Diocesan Inspector