



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GIFFARD CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WOLVERHAMPTON

Inspection dates 25th-26th June 2013
Reporting Inspector Paul Nutt

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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Nick Benton
School address	Hordern Close Hordern Road Newbridge Wolverhampton WV6 0HR
Telephone number	01902 556447
E-mail address	thegiffardprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2010
DFE School number	336 3315
Unique Reference Number	104383

Headteacher Mrs Ann Lombardi

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 and 2 half RE lessons with the headteacher or her deputy. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the chair and another governor, staff, and had a telephone conversation with the parish priest. He observed a full school assembly 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, Data Dashboard, the post-Ofsted development plan, teachers' planning, and internal records.

Information about the school

The Giffard is an average-size Catholic primary school serving the parishes of SS Peter and Paul and St Thomas of Canterbury in Newbridge, Wolverhampton. Nearly 47% of the children come from St Peter's ward which is one of the most deprived areas within the city, ranked in the top 10% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation and in the top 10% of the index of health and disability deprivation. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 46%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 60%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Attainment on entry is below the national average.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation The Giffard judges itself to be a satisfactory school, with some good features. The evidence gathered during the inspection supports overall this evaluation; indeed, there are positive indications that the school is improving and has capacity to maintain that improvement. The school has responded to the recommendations in its last Section 48 Inspection in 2010, and, as recommended in that report, there is now an improved Catholic profile in the school and most children demonstrate some understanding of other religions and cultures. However, the school needs to sustain, and evaluate rigorously, the impact of its programme of support for the RE co-ordinator. The school's evaluation of RE is securely founded on a wealth of supporting evidence. There is positive leadership of Catholic life, and especially collective worship, by the headteacher, who gives clear directional guidance. The drive and clarity of purpose of the recently appointed deputy head is strong, and evident in her support for RE and the co-ordinator, whilst driving forward more robust procedures for planning, assessment and recording. Governors lack rigour and precise understanding of key elements of their role. The absence of a link governor, as acknowledged during the inspection, is a contributory factor here; the identification of focused training for governors is necessary.

School self evaluation

The school's evaluation of its Catholic life and religious education is broadly accurate. Its current overall effectiveness is satisfactory. However, there are a number of good features, broadly in line with those suggested in the self evaluation document, and the inspection indicated capacity, through the head's leadership of Catholic life and the strong lead given by her deputy on RE, for the improvements to be sustained. Discrepancies are evident in the school's judgements about the leadership and management of its RE co-ordinator and governing body. Although some of the school self-evaluation document is descriptive rather than evaluative and analytical, with some overlap between the two

broad areas and the need for more specific exemplification and measurable evidence, the inspection visit was able to validate most of the school's internal judgements through observation and a significant evidence base. The school has heeded the recommendations of the previous section 48 report and was able to present evidence to support this. There are now systematic processes in place for monitoring and evaluating religious education and Catholic life, including termly assessment reviews, observations and performance management by the leadership team, pupil and parent questionnaires, which feed into subsequent school improvement planning. There is a new, improved marking policy whose implementation in mathematics and literacy, though acknowledged as patchy at present, is developing with the intention that it be implemented in RE. The school assesses achievement in RE to be satisfactory. There is sound evidence to confirm this judgement, and to indicate the intention to bring medium term planning and evaluation in line with literacy and mathematics. Baseline records indicate that the majority of pupils enter the school with weak knowledge and understanding, but that accelerated progress has been achieved by the end of their first year in the school, and that the gap is being narrowed by the end of Key Stage 1. Outcomes are broadly comparable with literacy by the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of learning and progress in RE are satisfactory overall; disadvantaged groups are well supported by generally effective classroom deployment. The curriculum, using the diocesan Curriculum Strategy and a well-structured family life programme, engages the majority of pupils, who speak positively of their lessons and teachers.

Pupils' contributions to the Catholic life of the school are considerable, as are the benefits they gain. As the school suggests, this is an area of strength which is very evident within the school. While this is difficult to monitor and evaluate, the school should use pupil interviews and a process of formal staff reflection to build an evidence base. The school motto is at the centre of so much, displayed in all classrooms in gold, as is the prominence of artefacts, prayer areas and displays. This, together with the shared high expectations identified by management, ensures the high quality of behaviour and interpersonal relationships at all levels. These in turn contribute to all forms of collective worship and prayer life, where the school's judgement of "good and often outstanding" can be validated. There is strong evidence of pupils' involvement in support and work for charities and good causes, both from the pupils themselves and documented evidence in school. School leaders monitor collective worship and prayer life informally, although they do identify in self-evaluation the need for more rigorous procedures.

The school evaluates leadership and management as satisfactory overall, though the picture presented is uneven. There is a clear vision of the nature of Catholic education, the importance of raising standards and the promotion of individual faith development. There is strong and committed leadership from the head and her deputy, and evidence of monitoring, evaluation and support, including a regular cycle of lesson observations, work sampling, review and presentations to governors. This has led to improved focused planning for school improvement seen during the inspection. There has been support across the phases and examples of positive outcomes seen in some of these classes. They have arranged a programme of support for the RE co-ordinator, details of which were available, enabling her to fulfil her role. Self-evaluation of governance is simply descriptive. The interview with governors revealed a lack of rigour and understanding of key elements of their role in relation to support and challenge. It was not clear what involvement takes place in planning and monitoring, what procedures to challenge and hold school leadership to account. There is currently no link governor for RE and Catholic life.

Lessons jointly observed during the inspection revealed broad agreement between the inspector and school leaders, but the quality of teaching was significantly below

evidenced performance over time, where internal records indicate that 58% of teaching overall is good or better. Work scrutiny confirms that these internal records are a more accurate reflection of teaching and learning.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes and provision for all pupils are satisfactory with some good features. Baseline evidence indicates that many pupils enter the school with weak knowledge and understanding, and that attainment in RE is low. Accelerated progress is achieved by the end of their first year in the school, and by the end of Key Stage 1 the gap is closing. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is broadly in line with literacy, where attainment in English is 72% Level 4+. There is still work to do in learning from religion (attainment target 2) and pupils' learning experiences are satisfactory overall. Learning and progress are also satisfactory, though for identified disadvantaged pupils they are good. Lessons are consistently well planned, using a recently-introduced proforma, and incorporate a range of resources that interest and engage the pupils. These include music, drama and ICT, which could perhaps be used more as a learning as well as teaching tool. All classrooms are well resourced and have relevant, colourful displays, with celebrations of pupils' work and prayer corners, link to the liturgical calendar and the Year of Faith. The school uses the diocesan Curriculum Strategy and has a well-developed sex and family life programme. The head and RE co-ordinator regularly attend cluster-group meetings and training, and the co-ordinator has met with an effective local RE co-ordinator.

Teaching is well planned using the school's proforma. There are medium-term plans for numeracy and literacy, and it is intended to implement this system for RE as well. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and use a wide range of strategies, including IT, music, prayer and scripture, to secure engagement and good progress. Assessments in RE are now well structured, and effective use is made of this information for planning, a response to advice during the last inspection. Books are marked consistently in the main, but developmental feedback and exemplification are an area for improvement, as are self-and peer-assessment for younger classes. All children benefit significantly from the breadth and appropriateness of the school's curriculum, as well as the many opportunities to develop a maturing understanding of their faith and vocation.

The Catholic life of the school is good. There is considerable pupil involvement in the faith life and collective worship, notably in preparing for and serving in Masses, which are celebrated each half term by the parish priest. Pupils are proud to be part of The Giffard School community, where they grow and develop in a caring, positive atmosphere inspired by the Gospel. Each year group has its saint, and the reasons for these choices and resulting work are displayed within the school. Pupils have an awareness and appreciation of the place of prayer in their lives, through its incorporation in the daily routines of the school, and understand their rights and responsibilities to themselves and others. The school council offers a forum for pupils to raise suggestions and concerns: for example, they have nominated individual charities for support, and the ways to raise funds, in addition to their already enthusiastic response to the schools' nominated charities.

The school is well led by the head, who oversees inclusion throughout the school, where she manages provision for EAL and the linked deployment of learning support assistants. She is well supported by her recently-appointed deputy, who is leading the drive for greater consistency in planning, assessment and recording. They share a clear sense of purpose, vision and direction, and their recent appointment to EYFS has strengthened

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.

performance in that key area of the school. There are positive links with other schools which afford opportunities to explore good practice. The RE co-ordinator has been helped in undertaking training through the diocese and working with a more experienced colleague in another school. The parish priest, whose temporary placement in post is a constraint, is supportive. He has helped with sacramental preparations, and celebrates half-termly Mass in school. The governors, who see their contribution as more robust than 18 months ago, have been involved in book monitoring, and have an up-to-date awareness of life in the school, through information presented in meetings or by other means of communication. Communication is good and includes families and the wider community through meetings, letters, newsletters, questionnaires, and the school's website. There is a willingness to consider suggestions and new initiatives with the continual aim of improving in-school provision and outcomes.

Recommendations

The school leadership has clear targets for improvement. However, the following will be especially significant in accelerating progress:

- develop the skills set of governors and identify a link governor
- drive forward formative assessment and feedback, especially in exercise books, to target future learning and raise attainment
- ensure a coherent plan is in place to support the RE co-ordinator
- extend opportunities for children's involvement in the liturgical life of the school



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July 2013

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of The Giffard Catholic Primary School, 25th-26th
June 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.

The school is at present satisfactory overall, with a number of good features. However, there are positive indications that the school is improving and has capacity to maintain that improvement. There is positive leadership of Catholic life, and especially collective worship, by the headteacher, who gives clear directional guidance. The school evaluates itself accurately and knows what it must do to improve further. The drive and clarity of purpose of her deputy head is strong, and evident in her support for religious education. The school's mission statement is at the heart of its Catholic life and collective worship, which are strong features. The children speak with enthusiasm about the school, enjoy their learning and feel safe and happy. When they first arrive at the school many children have limited religious knowledge but they make good progress. They develop their knowledge of Christ's teaching and understand the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. They know and can talk about a number of Bible stories, and are learning the importance of personal and traditional prayers. They also develop some understanding of other world religions. Teaching is well planned and the teachers have good subject knowledge. Lessons are often of good quality.

I have recommended that, in order to improve further, the school should develop its use of assessment, especially in exercise books, to help the children understand more clearly how to improve their work, and to extend opportunities for the children to be more widely involved in the liturgical life of the school. I have also recommended that the governors should be provided with training opportunities.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to spend time in your school and see how much your children enjoy their learning. I was made really welcome by everyone, and was very impressed by the collaboration and mutual support between the school and the wider community to ensure that all the children live happy and enjoyable lives.

Yours sincerely

Paul Nutt
Diocesan Inspector