



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cross Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6LN

Inspection dates	3 rd - 4 th December 2014
Reporting Inspector	Brenda Beale

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	237
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Ralph Lloyd
Telephone number	0121 357 3216
E-mail address	headteacher@holyname.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2009
DFE School Number	330/3308
Unique Reference Number	103996

Headteacher	Mr Andrew Neenan
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Previous inspection:	3
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This inspection:	3
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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 with the headteacher. 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 chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed a prayer service, an 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. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self-evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

Holy Name is an average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of Holy Name in Great Barr, Birmingham. Great Barr is a mixed area of council and private housing. The school's deprivation factor is below the national average. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 87%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 2.95%. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 4.4% well below the national average. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities is 19, slightly below the national average. Pupil stability and attendance is high. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation the leaders of Holy Name judge it to be a good Catholic school where the leadership of the Catholic life by the senior team and governors and collective worship are good, and teaching is good and sometimes outstanding leading to very good attainment in religious education. The school has been through a period of change, re-staffing and transition, but in RE significant progress has been made and the judgements are accurate and reliably based on newly established monitoring and evaluation systems. The judgements about Catholic life and collective worship are accurate but are not fully reliable and require improvement because they are not founded on a strong evidence base or established monitoring and evaluation procedures. Priorities for the further development of Catholic life and RE are appropriate. Communication between school leaders is a requires improvement for the school to be judged to be good.

School self-evaluation

In the short time that new leadership team has been in place much work has been undertaken to ensure that teaching and learning in RE is carefully monitored and improvement accomplished. Time has been taken to establish an effective teaching staff; leadership and governors have been successful in appointing and retaining excellent Catholic teachers. Teaching in other curriculum areas was carefully monitored using external expertise to assist in identifying good and outstanding teaching and rooting out bad practice. Leadership has not flinched from difficult decisions needed to establish a highly effective teaching force supported by a team of skilled teaching assistants. Teaching is monitored using triangular moderation: lesson observations, book trawls and data analysis. Book trawls and newly established data collection and analysis has enabled the school to reliably judge that current progress and attainment is good but it acknowledges that at the end of Key Stage 2 that there significant gaps in the children's prior learning. Leadership is endeavouring to close this gap in learning by ensuring pupils are currently

receiving outstanding teaching in Year 6. Vigorous monitoring of teaching has ensured that all groups of pupils throughout the school are now receiving teaching that is good or better. Effective monitoring and evaluation by the subject leader accurately and reliably judges attainment for children at the end of Key Stage 1 is good and in some cases outstanding. While monitoring of the curriculum and planning takes place using pupil outcomes, a broader range of criteria might be used.

The school uses an APP approach to assessment in RE where selected children from each ability group are assessed in detail, through written work and pupil interviews at the end of each assessment unit. The work of these pupils is also used to assess levels of attainment in RE. Areas for development are noted and used to inform future curriculum planning. Marking is focused on RE knowledge and understanding, based on 'pupil-speak' learning objectives and pupils receive RE based questions through written feedback to reflect on their learning and provide further challenge.

While the school's evaluation provides an accurate descriptive analysis of the Catholic life and worship it does not give much attention to any monitoring and evaluation processes which underpin it. At present, as the school acknowledges, the monitoring of the Catholic life is not carried out with the same degree of focus and intensity as that for subjects. There is an acceptance by leadership of the importance of monitoring and evaluation of these aspects of school life. Though the school has yet to establish formal systems to monitor and evaluate Catholic life and worship, there is evidence of a reflective approach to past and current practices that have led to improvement. This can be seen in 'house assemblies' led by the pupils. Until this year house meetings included prayer but focused largely on business and acknowledging successes. They now begin with a prayer service organised and led by pupils using ICT and music.

Audits have been carried out and led to improvements to the prayer focus in each classroom. Correct liturgical colours are now being used and the quality of presentation is exceptionally good. Resources have been reviewed and are being replenished. Plans are being developed to ensure regular audits by pupils and staff of prayer tables, religious artefacts and displays. Observation and learning walks have led to ensuring all displays are of the highest quality and that RE displays are plentiful.

Spiritual, moral and vocational development is only indirectly monitored as part of lesson observations but the school has yet to monitor the effect Catholic life and worship has on the pupils' lives. Evaluation of Catholic life is currently descriptive and does not evaluate the impact it has on pupils' lives although every member of staff regularly monitors pupil behaviour which is very good. Charitable work is reviewed and is a key feature of the school calendar.

Worship is carefully planned and timetabled with regular discussions taking place as to its effectiveness and impact. More formal procedures and minuted meetings would provide a stronger evidence base and clearer focus for development. Discussion and feedback take place between headteacher and the parish priest and their good working relationship provides the capacity to improve.

The governing body is well informed; the newly appointed chair is capable and astute as is the RE link governor. They consider that they are well informed about RE and the Catholic life by the headteacher. The link governor is actively involved in the life of the school. They provide support and challenge and are ready to seek external support and guidance to ensure smooth running of the school and its Catholic life.

RE is currently being led by the headteacher during the long term absence of the subject leader. Once this is resolved it will enable the headteacher and his deputy to concentrate on the development of Catholic life and worship. Both have the experience and skills required to develop these areas to a very high standard. Personnel are now in place and most staffing issues resolved making the capacity to improve to be good: this relies on the headteacher and his senior leadership team working closely together to create the culture of confidence and openness needed to drive forward development and improvement. Currently the senior team does not work sufficiently closely together. The governors have had some involvement in the evaluation process and have had sight of the self- evaluation document. The summary self evaluation document is predominantly the work of the headteacher with little input from other senior leaders or staff.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

On entry to Reception class, despite being new pupils being almost 100% Catholic, the children's knowledge and understanding of RE is very limited. Pupils gain knowledge, skills and understanding across all key stages as evidenced from book trawls. End-of-unit assessments show that a significant majority of almost all classes are working within or above the most able assessment criteria. There is a need to close the gap in Year 6 because historically those pupils have not received the best teaching. As the children progress through the school all learners, including those with SEN, make at least good progress. Lesson observations show that pupils enjoy their R.E. lessons and participate fully, showing good knowledge and understanding and high levels of engagement. Children with SEN are fully included in all aspects of RE and Catholic life, including Sacramental Preparation. These pupils are provided with differentiated and scaffolded activities. Teaching assistants are deployed, in line with whole school provision mapping, to provide support, where needed in to aid pupils' R.E. development; as a result of this provision, these pupils also make good progress.

Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities and participate fully in the Catholic life of the school and wider community. Pupils take their talents into the community by serving at Mass; Year 2 pupils visit a retirement home to sing carols every year. PSHE is an important part of the children's education; pupils take a leading role within circle time, listening with respect to one another, valuing the feelings of others and understanding the role that we play in the lives of others. The children feel very strongly that they are part of a community and wish to help those who are less fortunate than themselves. Ongoing charity work is a key feature of the school calendar. All children are involved in these activities. House captain assemblies provide regular opportunities for the older children to share their faith with the younger children.

Pupils engage fully in all acts of worship e.g. prayer time, hymn practices, during all R.E. lessons, Mass and participate and respond appropriately. The priest often comments on the positive responses from children during Mass. The celebration of Mass is a central part of school life and children in both key stages play an active part through leading the liturgy; and offertory procession and serving at the altar. Key Stage 2 classes lead whole school worship. Pupils' knowledge of traditional prayer is in line with diocesan expectations. They have good experience of different types of prayer: imaginative prayer, meditation, litany, petition and sung.

RE lessons which are planned carefully and differentiated in order to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils. Thorough subject knowledge is used by teachers to inspire and challenge pupils. In lessons, pupils are well engaged and keen to learn. They sustain

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.

concentration and achieve well. Lessons are well timed with appropriate pace. Good and imaginative use is made of resources, including ICT to boost learning. Support provided by other adults is effectively deployed. The school is seeking to collaborate with Stuart Bathurst Catholic School to provide educational expertise and support through the use of secondary teachers to enhance our provision of R.E. through Art and our repertoire of liturgical music.

Lessons are carefully planned using the diocesan Curriculum Strategy as a basis and are adapted further in response to ongoing assessment. Effective use is made of open and closed questioning to gauge pupils' understanding. Pupils are provided with good quality, detailed feedback, both orally and through marking, which is positively framed and includes questions to develop further thinking. Marking is used consistently to inform pupils of how well they have done and what they need to do to sustain good progress. End-of-unit assessments including pupil interviews are used to monitor progress and inform future planning where necessary.

The school's curriculum in RE is based firmly on the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools. The contribution of the school curriculum to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is good because prayer is an integral part of lessons and pupils take an active role during prayer. Focused discussion of curriculum-based and current issues during circle time provide a vehicle for the children's moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum at Holy Name encourages children to be reflective and reverent, to show kindness and compassion towards each other and the wider community, evident around school and responses to charitable work. All children and adults contribute to a safe and trusting environment where there is respect and care for each other based on gospel values. These are recognised and rewarded in whole school assemblies. All children are aware of the school rules and sanctions. Year 6 pupils receive an annual visit from a member of religious community in preparation for the Walsall Deanery Mass for Vocations.

Recommendations

- Develop a greater evidence base and systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of Catholic life and worship.
- Ensure leadership team work closely together sharing the responsibilities for RE, Catholic life and worship.
- Ensure the entrance of the school fully reflects the Catholic ethos of the school