

DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School
Barkby Thorpe Lane
Thurmaston
Leicester
LE4 8GP

12 September 2012
(Autumn Term 2012)

URN: 120218

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

School:	Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School
Headteacher:	Mrs Suzanne Henry
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Sarah Brett
Date of Inspection:	12 September 2012
Inspection Team:	Mrs Anne Recchia & Mr Michael Geraghty
URN:	120218
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

Description of the school

Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School is a larger than average school with 342 pupils on roll. The school serves the Parishes of The Divine Infant of Prague (Syston), St Gregory's (Sileby), St Theresa's (Birstall) and Sacred Heart (Rothley). Currently, 70% of the children are baptised Catholics. 18% of pupils are from other Christian denominations and 7% are from other faith backgrounds.

The school is situated on the outskirts of the city of Leicester. The catchment area is mixed in terms of social/economic background. Social deprivation is below national average. The number of children entitled to a free school meal has increased steadily over the last three years and now stands at 10.7%. The number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds has also been rising over the last few years and is now close to the national average, (31%). Around 15% of children are on the school's SEN register, four of which have statements. At the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils transfer to local Catholic Secondary schools (84% in 2012).

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements	
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Bishop Ellis is a good school with some outstanding features. It is very well respected locally. The school's values – 'Love God, aspire to be your best, forgive, be honest and care' permeate school life, making the school's mission real and tangible. Gospel values of compassion and care pervade the lived ethos of the school. Collective Worship, liturgy and prayer play a significant role and are real strengths of the school. The provision for community cohesion is outstanding and links with the local Catholic faith communities are also strong.

Standards in curriculum Religious Education are good overall, with teaching observed during the inspection ranging from good to outstanding. By the time pupils reach the top of the school, their attainment in Religious Education is good. School data would seem to indicate that standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. However, work scrutiny of recent and current work would appear to show that standards are good with staff now more confident and accurate in their judgements on pupil achievement in Religious Education. The school has worked hard to address this weakness and current tracking, plus the excellent teaching taking place, indicates that achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 will be good and in line with Literacy standards by the end of this year.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are worthy representatives of the school's values. They demonstrate very good relationships both with each other and with the staff. They use a wide range of fundraising and practical activities to respond eagerly to the needs of those experiencing hardship. The school's provision for Religious Education plays a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Overall effectiveness	Grade: 2
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

There are many good features in the work of Bishop Ellis, however in order to continue to improve, the following actions are recommended:

- Further develop the confidence of teachers in assessing levels of attainment in Religious Education through agreement trialling both within school and other diocesan schools.
- Further develop the tracking of pupils' progress in Religious Education in order that under achievement can be more rapidly identified and remedial action taken.
- To develop and embed assessment for learning in Religious Education.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Leaders and managers have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They are supported by an enthusiastic staff, who are willing and able to embrace new initiatives in order to develop the school still further. There is a considerable amount of good and in some cases, outstanding practice in the school, which when developed and sustained over a period of time will have a positive impact on standards. Further improvements in Religious Education will emerge with the development and embedding of recently revised assessment procedures. Once the highly detailed tracking system, currently being incorporated is fully in place, the school will be able to systematically analyse assessment data in Religious Education for individuals and vulnerable groups of pupils. It will support the drive to ensure that pupils of all abilities extend their learning and achieve at their optimum level. Governors are supportive of the school and have the ability to challenge and enhance the work of the senior leadership team. They are aware of the need to develop rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes in order to have a clear picture of the school, its strengths and areas for development.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade: 2

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

The school is developing early benchmarking tools which appear to indicate that a majority of children enter school with some knowledge of their faith appropriate to their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and soon acquire the necessary skills to retell Gospel stories and participate in prayer and acts of collective worship. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach a level which is consistent with national standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are producing work in line with and sometimes above age-related levels. Some pupils produce work that shows maturity and depth of thought. As a result, pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education are good and thanks to the school's commitment to tracking and evaluating attainment, there is excellent scope for standards to improve further for all groups of pupils. Recent Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including courses led by the diocese has had a positive effect on enabling teachers to make accurate judgements as to how pupils are achieving in their Religious Education work.

Upon entering any classroom, one is immediately struck by how the children are engaged by their teachers. This is made possible because excellent systems and routines are in place and are consistently implemented throughout the school. Planning in all of the lessons observed was of a very good standard and incorporated suitable differentiation for all ability groups. Outstanding teaching observed showed creative use of resources and subject matter that really enthused and challenged the pupils. For example, in one lesson the children explored the symbolism in a pre-Raphaelite painting in order to make links to later events in Christ's life. In another, children were challenged to understand how the belief in unconditional love shapes people's lives by exploring a contemporary newspaper account of the forgiveness shown by parents to the murderers of their son. This inspirational teaching enables children to reflect and make links, such

as a Hindu boy who was able to associate the wearing of his Rakhi bracelet to the love of the father for his prodigal son. Teachers know their pupils well and provide work that absorbs them and meets their individual needs. The behaviour of the children is exemplary. Relationships between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants are excellent. The moral development of the children is reflected in this positive behaviour. During discussions, all contributions are valued and this empowers pupils to take risks and explore ideas fully and creatively. Good practice was observed where a Learning Support Assistant took note of children's responses to inform assessment. Pupils enjoy their learning and talk openly about their work. Group work is particularly strong with children able to take turns, listen to the ideas of others as well as confidently offering their own. Different teaching styles are used to engage the children, such as dramas and 'conscious alleys'. ICT is also used widely and effectively to support learning. Creative use of interactive whiteboards and visualisers all help the pupils to access their learning at a level which caters for individual learning styles. Written work at all ages is generally well completed but can be let down by poor presentation. Assessment for learning (AfL) and developmental marking when used consistently will help to address this and add to the drive to raise standards further.

Pupils clearly benefit from and contribute to, the Catholic life of the school. They are proud of their school community and are keen to share their enjoyment of all aspects of school life. They are considerate to one another and show concern for those less fortunate, both locally and further afield. The school council is articulate and aware of the school's place in both the local and the wider communities, telling proudly of fund raising activities and cooperation between local schools. They feel safe and secure that poor behaviour is dealt with effectively and that any form of prejudice is not tolerated.

The participation of the children in liturgies and acts of worship is extremely good. There is a sense of reverence and respect from all the children. Great attention is given to creating prayerful atmospheres in acts of worship and liturgies which all children respond to positively. The chaplaincy team (voluntary Year 6 pupils) lead religious activities periodically for younger children in their lunchtimes and support the teachers in acts of worship, including an impressive liturgy at the Bishop's Conference for headteachers and governors in June 2011. Pupils respond well to traditional prayers, they are at ease when praying with the community and in the singing of hymns. Children have opportunities to compose and read out their own prayers as well as passages from scripture. Children in Year 6 spoke with pride when recalling how they devised, prepared and delivered their own liturgy, choosing readings, prayers and hymns completely independently.

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups	Grade: 2
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LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly committed to the mission of the Church and demonstrate this through the provision of a well-balanced curriculum which has pupils' spiritual and moral development at its heart. The school's self evaluation is rigorous and founded on sound evidence and accurate data collection. Leaders and managers are therefore aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and have realistic plans to address these. Leaders and managers have ensured that in-service training has been well targeted, tackling key areas for development. This is beginning to have an impact on pupil outcomes, raising attainment and identifying groups and individual pupils requiring further support.

The school has been through a period of change in the last two years. The headteacher has taken on additional roles and responsibilities during this time especially in the leadership of Religious Education. Raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching have been a priority and training is beginning to have an impact on teaching and learning in Religious Education. New appointments recently have ensured that the headteacher now has the support of a strong senior management team who share her vision for the school and are driving through improvements enthusiastically. Good systems for induction of new staff to the school are in place and use both expertise within the school and external support, including diocesan training. As a result teaching and support staff confidently plan lessons using the 'Here I Am' and more recently the 'Come and See' Religious Education programmes. Teachers have become more assured in the assessment and levelling of pupils' work and as a consequence, can now track pupils' progress more accurately. The school recognises that this is in its infancy and needs further development.

There are many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development. All staff and pupils have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school as seen in the reverence shown in acts of collective worship, the outstanding behaviour of pupils and the excellent relationships within the whole school community. Pupils can articulate the school's distinctive mission and take a pride in their school, valuing all that it has to offer.

Leaders and managers promote community cohesion to an outstanding level. Bishop Ellis is a very inclusive school. Respect, hospitality and concern for others are very evident which makes the school a harmonious, cohesive unit. Very effective links are made with the wider community including the parishes linked to the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is good. The school works very effectively with pupils with behaviour difficulties using appropriate intervention strategies which ensure that pupils become well integrated and make progress. Pupils' friendship bonds are very positive, crossing cultural, faith and social boundaries. There is a real sense of a community working together towards a common goal. Pupils value their own religious identity and that of others in their community. Leaders and managers ensure that pupils are knowledgeable and respect the faith of others, providing opportunities for pupils to engage with people of other faiths and cultures. Staff and pupils take part enthusiastically in charitable fundraising for local, national and international causes.

Leaders and managers make appropriate links with other schools and colleges locally including the Thurmaston and Syston Development Group and the Local Catholic family of schools. Collaboration on common areas for development allow leaders and managers to share good practice and in turn raise standards. Transfer to secondary school is well managed as a result of these links. The school takes a full and active role in training teachers of the future, ensuring they are well supported and mentored. They have also been involved in supporting Swiss trainee teachers over the last four years thereby gaining knowledge and understanding of education systems further afield.

The school has close links with the parishes it serves. The parish priests are regular visitors to the school and value the contribution the headteacher and staff make to the faith development of the pupils. The school acts as a centre for communication and coordination for pupils' sacramental preparation. Parents are well informed of their child's progress and their views are sought bi-annually. Swift actions are taken to address any problems. The school is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of parents and ensures that no child is excluded from any school activity regardless of the cost. Parents feel confident approaching the school and sharing any concerns.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is good. The headteacher has acted as subject leader for the last two years during periods of maternity leave. Leadership of the subject has concentrated on the effective use of assessment and the levelling of pupils' work. Teaching staff have become increasingly more confident in their ability to accurately assess pupils work against the Broad Areas of Attainment and are beginning to refine this to include assessment using sublevelling. Tracking of pupils' progress in Religious Education is still at an early stage and needs to be further developed to ensure leaders have a clear view of the progress of individuals and specific groups. The effective monitoring of teaching and subsequent well targeted support and training is having a very positive effect on standards. The introduction of the new Religious Education programme, 'Come and See' has been welcomed by staff and is already having an impact on the enjoyment and progress of pupils in Religious Education.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively and are influential in the Catholic direction of the school. They are well informed through very detailed head teacher's reports, data analysis and visits to the school. The Chair of Governors has regular meetings with the headteacher and undertakes monitoring activities that ensure governors are able to support and challenge the work of the school. Governors have established an appropriate committee structure that uses their varied skills and expertise effectively. They engage well with parents regularly seeking their views through surveys, meetings and consultations and have a high profile within the school especially at key events throughout the year.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	Grade: 2
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PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education

The quality of teaching at Bishop Ellis School ranges from good to outstanding. Planning is effective. Lessons are well differentiated to cater for the varied needs of pupils. In lessons where outstanding teaching was observed teachers plan lessons that engage and challenge all learners taking into consideration different learning styles. Lessons are vibrant and highly effective in enthusing learners and ensuring that progress is made. The school recognises that the sharing of outstanding practice will serve to raise standards further in the future. Appropriate use is made of new technology to maximise learning and sustain interest. Good use is also made of other resources especially other adults who are deployed well to support and challenge pupils. They are well briefed and trained to work with all ability groups. Creative use is made of cross-curricular links to engage the interest of pupils. Teachers show good subject knowledge, being well supported through staff in service training. The leadership team is aware of the need to continue this level of training to sustain high standards and improve the quality of teaching further.

Feedback to pupils is generally good orally but marking does not sufficiently inform pupils of the 'next step' in their learning. Pupils need to be more involved in their own assessment, have a good idea of where they are in their learning and understand how they can improve. In some classes, target cards are used effectively to inform pupils in this way, however the use of these is not consistent throughout the school. Assessment against level descriptors has improved and is becoming more finely tuned. This will aid the identification of pupils needing further support and those that could be challenged to achieve at higher levels. The school has identified this as an area for development.

The Religious Education curriculum is good and improving. It meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is responsive to diocesan requirements. Teachers have embraced the new programme wholeheartedly and plan interesting and imaginative lessons to captivate the interests of the pupils. Pupils are able to relate what they are learning in Religious Education to their everyday lives and use biblical references to support the decisions they make on a day-to-day basis. In this way the Religious Education curriculum is effective in the development of pupils morally, spiritually and socially. The school provides many opportunities to enrich the curriculum with themed days, weeks, visits and visitors to the school. The school offers a varied menu of extra curricular activities ensuring access for all. Pupils are encouraged to take part in activities with a religious and spiritual nature at different times in the year. The chaplaincy group is being developed to include a wider variety of activities where pupils increasingly take the lead in planning and leading worship.

Collective worship is fundamental to the life of the school. Prayer and worship meet the spiritual needs of all the pupils; it is inclusive and diverse responding very effectively to the needs and varied backgrounds of the pupils. Worship is well planned and forms an integral part of the school day. Pupils from a very early stage are encouraged to participate in both formal and informal prayer. During the inspection, pupils in the Foundation Stage were able to celebrate their uniqueness in the sight of God through very practical and tangible means. Children were able to understand that God loved them in a very special way. Skilled leadership and knowledgeable staff develop skills systematically so that pupils in the latter stages of Key stage 2 are prepared to take on

leadership of collective worship as members of the chaplaincy team. Pupils are beginning to plan and lead their own acts of worship with increased skill and competence. Further training for pupils in this key area will only serve to enhance the outstanding provision. Parents and parishioners are welcomed and encouraged to attend school liturgies and celebrations. Collective worship and prayer contributes very effectively to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	Grade: 2
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Inspection Judgements Summary

Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	2
How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	2
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	2
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	2
How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	1
How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	2
How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.	2
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1