



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Vauxhall Grove, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4HP

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Inspection date	27 <sup>th</sup> and 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Reporting Inspector	Paul Nutt
Assistant Inspector	Victoria Brickley

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	257
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Barbara Kelly
Telephone number	0121 675 2359
E-mail address	enquiry@stvincnt.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	January 2012
DFE School Number	330 3310
Unique Reference Number	103417

<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Janet Tibbits</b>
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Previous inspection:	Outstanding
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This inspection:	Good
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspectors observed teaching across 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors and two other governors, the headteacher, the RE subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school prayer service, registration and class-based worship in Reception Class and Years 4 and 6, 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## Information about the school

- St Vincent's is an average size primary school that serves the parish of St Vincent de Paul, Aston and Vauxhall.
- The vast majority of pupils are from a minority ethnic background.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 18%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is well above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is well below national expectations.
- Since the last inspection in 2012, both the RE Coordinator and parish priest have changed: the school has become a member of a *Caritas Christi in Urbe* group of schools which have come together for collaboration and support

## Main Findings

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding and continually under review, providing an ideal environment for all to develop in faith; however, more regular use of formal procedures for recording and evidencing would better support internal judgements.
- Collective worship is a strong, integral part of the life of the school; pupils are encouraged to prepare and take an active part at all levels, which an increasing number do.
- Provision for, and outcomes from RE are secure, contributing to the engagement, progress and attainment for many pupils; however, planning and assessment procedures could be further refined to ensure even coverage of pupils' learning from religion, while increased opportunities for extended writing would enhance learning.

- Strong and committed leadership is evident in all areas of the school; individuals demonstrate their personal commitment to the Faith, and there is a collective drive towards continually improving on previous best in all areas of school life.
- The school mission is widely displayed and used throughout the school: there are many examples of charitable works, linking very strongly to the pupils' sense of vocation.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

### Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- The Catholic life of the school, its provision and outcomes, is outstanding.
- Catholic life at St Vincent's is very strong and inclusive, with prominence given to Catholic values, and to the school's mission statement:  
*Here in our school, we give ourselves to be children of God.  
He walks by our side and speaks through our lips.  
He opens our minds and leads us to life.*
- The school introduced the *Respect* curriculum eighteen months ago. With its focus on mind, body, soul and values, it has developed and enhanced the whole-school curriculum, linking with the Relationships and Sex Education programme "In the Beginning".
- There are prayer corners in each teaching area, and elsewhere around the school; these reflect the liturgical seasons, and include artefacts and statues, and a wealth of resources including Bibles, rosary beads, and class learning journals.
- The prayer life of the school is excellent and beneficial to all pupils, individually and collectively; traditional prayers are introduced progressively throughout the school.
- Opportunities to observe a full range of worship were limited during the inspection; however, prayer services, both whole-school and individual years, offered opportunities for pupils to lead, using their own prayers and a range of other resources, and demonstrating reverence and appropriate behaviour. School mass takes place weekly.
- The areas for development identified at the last Section 48 Inspection (2012) have been addressed, though developments and refinements are ongoing.
- There are many excellent examples of charitable works, including CAFOD and supporting schools in an Eritrean diocese; these link very strongly to the pupils' sense of vocation and wide range of faiths, "what God calls me to be", which is a striking feature of the school's Catholic life.
- Pupils learn about other major world religions: there is an annual faith week which focuses on world faiths and cultures, including visits to other places of worship. The school has a strong International Curriculum, including visits abroad, which allows pupils to understand their role in the world-wide church community. The School of Sanctuary Award programme enables them to see they can make a difference in the lives of others. The pupils speak very positively of these opportunities.
- The school provides an ideal environment for all to develop in faith. Behaviour around the school is exemplary, and the children initiate and respond with great enthusiasm to their lives here, the many opportunities offered and the responsibilities entrusted to them.

- Pupils demonstrate both interest and a real sense of responsibility for the Catholic life of the school; for example through the effective application of peer mediation, opportunities to lead liturgy, and their involvement in monthly lunches for parishioners.
- Spiritual and moral development is a priority in school; there is an all-encompassing ethos which values all equally, and to which all pupils respond with generosity and understanding.
- There are established links between the school, families, the parish and the Church. These are developed and fostered through the unstinting efforts of support and evangelisation of Father Solomon Ghebray. The headteacher, senior assistant head and one other teacher leads the weekly children's liturgy in church.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship are outstanding.
- Strong and dynamic leadership is evident in all areas of the school. Individuals demonstrate their personal commitment to the Faith, and there is a collective commitment towards continually driving forward standards in all areas and improving on previous best.
- All staff respond with dedication and enthusiasm to the example of the headteacher, whose commitment and enthusiasm are continually evident for all.
- Relationships with partners in the Caritas group are good: St Vincent's works closely with the other schools to mutual benefit, whilst retaining its own identity, ethos and purpose.
- Planning is founded on sound evidence and data, using key areas for development and building on areas of strength: however, there needs to be more frequent scheduling, recording and systematic evaluation of practice to better inform school improvement.
- Plans are implemented effectively and reviewed with reference to the extent to which pupils benefit from them.
- Effective processes and procedures are in place for the governing body, which ensures that they offer both support and challenge. They visit school regularly, where they feel very welcome, and meet regularly with school leaders; they have a sound understanding of life at St Vincent's.
- Catholic life and collective worship are monitored and evaluated towards school improvement: results of learning walks and less formal observations are shared; however, greater rigour and frequency in procedures and processes would strengthen judgements and improvement.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- Provision and outcomes for Religious Education are good.

- Leadership of RE is good.
- Leaders conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes, offering a basis for diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, a lack of precision was evident in the detail of the monitoring cycle.
- The school development plan includes Catholic life and RE as a clear priority. This plan is reviewed regularly by senior leaders and informs future improvement planning. The review process would benefit from greater emphasis on the impact of the plan rather than focusing on the completion of actions.
- The coordinator of RE has supported planning and teaching in Years 2 and 3 as part of those teachers' professional development.
- Governors have oversight of religious education and fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities.
- The RE curriculum is enriched through sharing ideas and strategies from within and beyond the school - for example, its collaborations within the Caritas group of schools.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development and raises pupils' awareness of other faiths, ensuring coherence with the wider learning opportunities through Catholic life.
- The parish priest and Sister Mary, who works alongside him in the parish, visit school when commitments allow and contribute to the teaching and learning of RE as well as sacramental preparation in school.
- Baseline assessments indicate below average knowledge and understanding for the majority of children on entry to the school. However, records indicate that, by the end of the year in Reception class, progress is accelerated and has closed the gap for many pupils. This quality of progress is sustained year on year so that attainment is good.
- The progress of disadvantaged or disabled pupils and those with special needs matches or is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Teaching is securely good and carefully planned. The lessons seen revealed close agreement with internal evaluations over time and evidence of internal observations. Good use is made of a range of learning styles and resources, so that all pupils can make progress. Careful thought is given to the deployment of classroom support; all plans include opportunities for differentiation.
- Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and achievement is generally good. Wider use of more challenging shared targets would help pupils to secure better outcomes more regularly.
- All teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, and use a wide range of strategies, including IT, music, prayer and scripture, to secure engagement and progress. Class teachers should continue to focus on using gap tasks, where appropriate to provide opportunities for pupils to learn from religion and to understand the place of the Faith in their own lives.
- There is a strong induction and support programme for continuing professional development within the school and its Caritas partners. Individual plans are put in place as appropriate, including internal support, the Diocesan training programme, and the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Teaching Assistants are deployed to good effect, with ongoing support where required. They attend staff briefings, which keeps them abreast of contemporary

issues and developments in school, whilst offering the opportunity to raise and concerns they may have.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the school should:**

- Develop greater rigour and frequency in procedures and processes for judging Catholic life and collective worship towards continuing school improvement.
- Refine its development plan for RE to give clear information about milestones for review with dates, confirm completion and indicate impact on future developments.
- Enhance learning opportunities and outcomes by consistent use of shared challenge targets.