



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM

Inspection dates 26th - 27th November 2012
Reporting Inspector Mr Dominic Collins

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Teresa Paszkowski
School address	Dudley Road Birmingham B18 7QW
Telephone number	0121 675 0767
E-mail address	enquiry@stpatrc.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2010
DFE School number	330 3346
Unique Reference Number	103439

Headteacher Mrs Mary O'Friel

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 jointly shared 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. He held meetings with the chair of governors, the chair of the governors' mission and strategy committee, school leadership, parish priest, staff, and parents. He observed a whole school assembly, a parish Mass led by Year 6 pupils and class based acts of collective worship, 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, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

St. Patrick's is a slightly smaller than average sized Catholic primary school located in the Ladywood area of Birmingham and together with St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, serves the parish of St Patrick. The parish church is adjacent to the school site. The majority of pupils are drawn from the local area. A higher than average percentage of pupils is from minority ethnic groups of whom a significant proportion speak English as an additional language. There are currently 200 pupils on roll and an increasing number of Eastern European families joining the school, have raised the percentage of baptised Catholic pupils to 60%, although far fewer are practising the faith. Foundation baseline assessments reveal a significantly low level of attainment on entry. The majority of children have very little knowledge, understanding or experience of the Catholic faith. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. In April 2011, St. Patrick's entered into a permanent federation with St Edmund's Catholic school and now shares an executive headteacher and one governing body, to provide the strategic governance of both schools.

Main Finding

In its self evaluation the school judges that its Catholic life and religious education are good. Evidence obtained during the course of the inspection confirms that these judgements are fully justified. Judgements made by the school, regarding the quality of its Catholic life, collective worship and overall RE provision, are further strengthened by the accurate identification of areas in need of review and development. It is also evident that the governing body and school leadership work in close liaison to ensure the best possible outcomes for the pupils. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection, brought about by the introduction and development of effective monitoring and evaluation processes that are realistically prioritised in a programme of RE improvement planning that is implemented and shared by all.

School self evaluation

The outcomes of St Patrick's School self evaluation presents an accurate, up to date analysis of the school's Catholic life and religious education and crucially, provides the information necessary to put into place a developmental improvement plan to

move the school forward. A cycle of monitoring, analysis and review has been established by the present leadership. Implicit in this process is an emerging culture of self evaluation that is built into many facets of Catholic life and RE involving governors, staff and pupils, the impact of which, is taking effect with a gathering momentum. For example processes used for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the Catholic life at St Patrick's School reflect the commitment, drive and vision of its leadership. It is clearly evident that striving to fulfil the Catholic mission of the school is the highest priority together with the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The school governors are well organised and work in close liaison with the school through the actions of a dedicated governors mission and strategy committee, which has the key responsibility for evaluating the Catholic life of both federated schools, as well as the standards achieved by the pupils in RE. They are fully aware of the quality of the Catholicity of the school and of its areas for development and therefore, while being fully supportive, are able to hold the school to account. The focus to promote and develop the Catholic life of the school as part of the monitoring process, is evidenced by the fact that all staff have a performance management target to improve the independence of pupils in supporting the Catholic life of the school, together with a focus on collective worship.

Central to the daily life of the school are the opportunities for all staff and children to share collective worship. Through the regular monitoring processes the school has formulated and used to evaluate and review effectiveness, the quality of collective worship has improved. The school correctly judges that this continues to be a strength. As a result, a clear, systematic planning model for collective worship is now established and used well.

The school is currently developing a formal framework, within which the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and collective worship is conducted. Effective systems are already in place brought about through collaboration between staff, governors, the parish priest, pupils and the involvement of parishioners. The outcomes of discussions, questionnaires, views and reviews, are documented, analysed and actioned. These initiatives are successfully impacting on the Catholic character of the school and are reflected in its distinctive Catholic ethos.

The school judges the leadership of religious education to be satisfactory and rapidly improving. The new co-ordinator is passionate about developing all aspects of RE throughout the school and although recently appointed, there is strong evidence that, in liaison with the school leadership, refinements have been made and systems put in place that are having a positive impact. For example, the introduction of RE targets for each child has enabled pupils to see how they can move their learning forward in a similar way to that employed in other curricular areas. Pupil conferencing is widely used and outcomes channelled to provide a useful measure for lesson planning and their overall impact.

A comprehensive review of all aspects of the way the achievement of pupils in RE can be improved has been made. As a result, effective systems have been carefully and succinctly formulated, showing a clear relationship between self evaluation and improvement planning that is shared and actioned by all staff where appropriate. Priorities within the present improvement plan are appropriate in relation to evaluation outcomes. In similar fashion, a monitoring and observation timetable is in place that embraces other areas, for example: RE lesson observations, book trawls, pupil conferences and planning scrutiny. These are conducted thoroughly, with outcomes documented and shared. This practice is also contributing in a positive way, towards embedding a culture of self evaluation throughout the school.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes for pupils in RE show an improving picture overall, however, there are areas of inconsistency that need to be addressed. These have already been identified by the school. Foundation baseline assessments reveal a significantly low level of attainment on entry and the majority of children have very little experience of the Catholic faith. The 'every child matters' agenda is evident in all aspects of school life. Staff are aware of pupils' individual needs and the school works hard to nourish the children with the values of the Gospel message. However, although pupil progress in RE is good, achievement is below expectations. The children receive a good start to their faith journey and because of the encouragement, religious experiences and opportunities they are able to share, progress in their knowledge and understanding continues to improve. They are able to recount stories relating to the teachings of Jesus and show an understanding of how these have important links to our daily lives in the form of love, trust, peace and forgiveness.

The contribution of pupils to the Catholic life of the school and collective worship and the extent to which they benefit from them are very good. Pupils' response to collective worship is a real strength. They understand different forms of collective worship and demonstrate a real interest and enthusiasm to plan and share these opportunities together, as a class or in a whole school setting. Pupils are comfortable in prayer and readily respond to opportunities given for reflection. Excellent examples of collective worship were observed during the inspection. Relationships at all levels throughout the school are good and have a very positive impact on the daily life and teaching and learning overall. The pastoral care of pupils is given high priority by all members of staff. The school behaviour policy is effective, understood by all pupils and followed by all members of staff, including lunchtime supervisory staff who are also effective in supporting this initiative, this is a major strength. The Catholic ethos of the school underpins all aspects of school life and the headteacher and senior leadership team together successfully communicate a clear vision to promote and enrich it, a vision shared by a caring and dedicated staff. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction and a determination to drive the school forward.

The school has developed strong links with the parish. Encouraged and supported by the parish priest, sacramental classes are held in school, following a monthly youth parish Mass, which is led by staff and the RE leaders from both schools. Parishioners are involved and many volunteer to become prayer partners for the children. The school RE leader is also chair of the parish finance committee with other staff forming part of the committee. A school staff member is chair of the parish council, testament to the effective liaison between school and parish. RE is well led and managed by the co-ordinator and headteacher who are constantly seeking ways to develop it further. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. All learners are able to access the RE curriculum and are very well guided by excellent support staff.

RE lessons observed during the inspection were each characterised by clear developmental planning, effective questioning techniques employed by the teacher and well matched activities to engage all learners. The positive attitude of pupils and the quality of recorded work in their books demonstrates their interest and enjoyment of RE lessons.

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.

Recommendations

- Develop the recently introduced system of levelling all pupils' work in RE in order to identify areas of weakness and progress by groups and individuals.
- Develop greater opportunities for pupils to carry out independent learning activities and enquiry.
- Evaluate the way in which the Catholic life of the school is evident through the whole curriculum and to develop this within the school.



Diocesan Education Service,
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December 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, November 2012

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 Patrick's School has an excellent Catholic ethos and the level of care and encouragement your children receive from the headteacher and her staff allows them to develop as happy, confident learners. The school evaluates its provision very effectively and has good capacity to develop further. As a result of the well planned and effective teaching, pupils make good progress in their religious education. The Catholic mission of the school underpins all aspects of its daily life and the evidence of attitude to work, values and spiritual development is demonstrated by the way pupils embrace it. Collective worship is a strength of the school and is very well planned. The school is very well supported by an effective and committed governing body and parish priest.

In order to broaden learning in RE, I have recommended that the school:

- Develop the recently introduced system of levelling all pupils' work in RE in order to identify areas of weakness and progress by groups and individuals.
- Develop greater opportunities for pupils to carry out independent learning activities and enquiry.
- Evaluate the way in which the Catholic life of the school is evident through the whole curriculum and to develop this within the school.

It was a pleasure to inspect St Patrick'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,

Dominic Collins
Diocesan Inspector