



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL COVENTRY

Inspection dates 18th - 19th November 2013
Reporting Inspector Mrs Margaret Dance

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	401 (R – Y6)
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr William Warrington
School address	Bray's Lane Coventry CV2 4DW
Telephone number	02476 453314
E-mail address	office@sacredheart.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
DFE School number	331 3404
Unique Reference Number	103709

Headteacher Mrs Helen Quinn

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, and to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time, the inspector observed 3 RE lessons, together with the leader of RE, completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils. She held meetings with governors, including the parish priest, and staff. She observed a whole school Mass and a whole school assembly. She 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 including the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation procedures, assessment records and planning. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about the leadership of RE which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

Sacred Heart School is a larger than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of Sacred Heart in Coventry. The percentage of children who are baptised Catholic is high at 92%. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average and nearly half of the pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of children with English as an additional language is higher than average and there are 21 languages spoken. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and entitled to the pupil premium is below the national average. The percentage of children with learning needs and/or disabilities supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Attainment is above average overall.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation Sacred Heart School accurately judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic school where staff are committed to ensuring that the school becomes a flourishing centre of Catholic lifelong learning. The school is a worshipping community which nurtures and supports each member of the community in their journey of faith. It has a distinctive Catholic ethos based on the principle of enabling all children to reach their God-given potential. The school's judgement that the children's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith by the end of Year 6 demonstrates outstanding progress from a low baseline on entry in Reception is fully justified. This is a direct result of teaching which is at least good and often outstanding and which stimulates the children's enjoyment and promotes their learning. The self-evaluation is accurate in stating that RE provision has a powerful effect on children's behaviour, promoting a love of learning and providing them with a very good understanding of right and wrong and the ability to make good moral decisions. The school is correct in its judgement that the children's contribution to the Catholic life of the school and their response to and participation in collective worship are outstanding.

School self evaluation

The school uses an impressive range of self-evaluation procedures to provide reliable information on its current practice in RE. Regular moderation of assessed pieces of work in RE, together with book scrutinies and interviews with pupils support the evaluation of teaching and learning. They demonstrate that teachers provide an appropriate level of challenge and opportunities for independent learning for all children. There is sound evidence that pupils have very good knowledge of the RE curriculum as appropriate to their

age and experience and are able to reflect on their learning and apply the message of the Gospel to their own lives. End of unit assessments and termly review of targets confirm the school's judgement that standards are high and demonstrate both individual and class progress from year to year. The judgement that teaching and learning are at least good and often outstanding is based on a programme of lesson observations by the senior leadership team which focus not only on teaching but also on outcomes for the pupils. Review and feedback provide developmental advice to promote improvement. Joint observations with the headteacher and RE co-ordinator in the course of the inspection confirm the accuracy of their judgements. Children's work is marked regularly, with most teachers referring to the learning objective, asking searching questions and giving guidance on how the work could be improved. The children's response to marking is developing to provide a formative dialogue with the teacher and promote further improvements.

The school judges correctly that the provision for and quality of collective worship are outstanding. The parish priest, as link governor for RE, comments in his monitoring on the children's reverence, the liturgical structure of acts of worship, the appropriate use of resources and the sharing of Scripture. There is clear evidence from talking to the children and from experience during the inspection that the children enjoy assemblies, Masses and prayer services and are confident in their participation.

Accurate evidence that the impact of the Catholic life of the school and the children's contribution to it is outstanding is gathered from learning walks by the senior management and governors, questionnaires for parents and pupils and audits of aspects of provision. Children have responsibility for monitoring the prayer focus in each classroom, supported by the leader of RE, which ensures that high standards are maintained. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school provide effective support for strategic forward planning.

In view of the rigour, robustness and accuracy of its self-evaluation the school is in a strong position to consolidate its success and to secure further improvements in both the Catholic life of the school and RE.

Overall effectiveness of the school

The headteacher of Sacred Heart Catholic School provides outstanding and inspirational leadership. Together with her senior leaders, she demonstrates strong commitment to the Catholic life of the school, the spiritual growth of the community and the provision of high quality Catholic education. The mission to "pray, reflect, learn and grow to mirror the love of Jesus" is evident in all areas of school life.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the distinctive nature of the school. They have a strong spiritual identity, whether Catholic or other faith. The diversity of faith is shared and celebrated through the RE curriculum. Children demonstrate very good moral values and respect for one another and have a clear understanding of the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. Through the SEAL curriculum, enhanced by friendship groups and peer supporters, children are encouraged to develop strong friendships and to work through conflicts that arise. Pastoral care and guidance for the children and their families is outstanding. The children feel safe and secure in school and respond very well to the support they receive. The children's opinions are valued highly, and the school council meets weekly to discuss ideas for the future development of their school. A programme of family life education provides effective moral guidance in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The leader of RE provides outstanding leadership. She co-ordinates a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation of RE which promotes the highest standards of teaching and learning. Her expertise has been shared throughout the Catholic schools in Coventry through providing training which the school offered to teachers new to Catholic schools.

The children's enthusiasm for and enjoyment of RE reflects their teachers' passion for the subject. Their behaviour in RE lessons is outstanding. They collaborate very well with one another and are fully engaged in their learning. A wide range of activities, carefully planned to ensure that the children are appropriately challenged, and supported by a wealth of excellent resources, enthuse and motivate the children. There is some outstanding work in the books of all year groups and most children are careful with presentation and take a pride in their work. The school environment is enhanced by high quality RE displays which celebrate the children's achievement, challenge their thinking and extend their learning. Particularly noteworthy is the "Year of Faith" corridor, developed to support the children's journey of faith during the last year.

Progress is outstanding across the school. Although the majority of children are baptised Catholics, on entry to the school their attainment is low. Most have little experience of church or of Catholic practice. In Key Stage 1 children are able to build on the excellent learning in RE which they experience in the Foundation Stage so that by the end of Year 2 the majority are achieving at a level at least in line with diocesan expectations. They can retell their favourite Bible stories, know that Jesus used stories to teach His disciples about God, know why and how we pray and can write their own prayers. This rate of progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6 most children achieve at a level above diocesan expectations. Their ability to retell stories from the Old Testament and the life of Jesus in detail and to analyse the meaning of these stories and apply them to their own lives is well developed. For example, children in Year 6 can identify characters from the Old Testament who showed jealousy or who were challenged by God and reflect on what these stories teach them about the characters themselves, their relationship with God and God's relationship with his people. Children with learning needs are well supported and make very good progress throughout the school. This reflects the mostly good, and often outstanding, teaching in RE which promotes effective learning and enjoyment of the subject.

The RE curriculum is based on the curriculum strategy "Learning and Growing as the people of God", which is subject to ongoing review and evaluation based on thorough assessments to ensure progression and full coverage of the Strategy. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of Catholic heritage and places of worship of other religions, and by residential and on-site retreats.

Provision for collective worship is outstanding and is a strength of the school. The Mass and other forms of collective worship are at the heart of school life and are enlivened through a strong musical tradition of both modern and traditional hymns. The children respond enthusiastically to the vibrant acts of worship prepared for them. They enjoy selecting liturgical music, providing the focal point for prayer, participating in sacred dance and planning their own prayer services. They act with reverence and respect and participate with confidence. The children have very good knowledge and understanding of the forms and purposes of prayer and know prayers relevant to their age and experience. Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, the Eucharist and Confirmation, which is carried out in school and is supported at home and in the parish, is of primary importance at Sacred Heart.

The parish priest provides excellent spiritual and pastoral support. He is actively involved in the faith formation of all members of the school community, encouraging children in their Mass attendance through a "Passport to Faith" programme. This initiative has resulted in a growing number of children attending the parish Masses at Sacred Heart church at the weekend and contributing by serving on the altar, taking the Offertory gifts and singing in the choir. Children who are too young to have received the Sacrament of the Eucharist are included through attending *Growing Church* and *Little Church*.

Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of the practices of other faiths through the annual Faith Focus Week where they learn about different world faiths. They demonstrate their understanding of their responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves both at home and globally through the many fund-raising activities which they undertake and their participation in local initiatives.

Governors are regular visitors to the school and monitor provision and progress through first-hand observation, headteacher's reports and presentations by senior staff. They have very good knowledge of standards and of the impact of targeted interventions for significant groups of children. They are very well informed and provide appropriate support and challenge for the school in tackling any issues which arise in its determination to secure improvement. They have a clear vision for the future of Sacred Heart as a potential training school.

Sacred Heart School is an outstanding Catholic school where all pupils benefit from the rich spiritual and moral values which permeate all aspects of school life. The holistic experience it provides enables them to engage constructively with and contribute positively to their Faith community, both in school and in the wider world.

Recommendations

Continue to share the outstanding practice in RE and the Catholic life of the school with other diocesan schools.