



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### ST. ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Washington , Road Caversham, Reading RG4 5AA

---

Inspection date 17-18<sup>th</sup> October 2016  
Reporting Inspector Joseph Skivington

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

---

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5-11years
Number on roll	197
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mr Peter Kayes
Telephone number	0118 937 5537
E-mail address	admin@st-annes.reading.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2011
DFE School Number	8703302
Unique Reference Number	110003

**Headteacher** Mrs Margot Buller

Previous inspection: Good

This inspection: Good

---

## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- 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 inspector observed teaching across 7 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of 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 vice chair of governors, the head teacher, the subject leader, and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a Door of Mercy liturgy procession, a whole school 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## Information about the school

- St. Anne's is a smaller than average primary school serving the parish of Our Lady and St. Anne, Caversham. A nursery attached to the school opened this year.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities and with English as an additional language is above the national averages..
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 62%.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those with pupil premium support is above average.
- Pupils enter the school with attainment typical for their age group.
- The school is led by an executive head teacher, who is also the head of St. Martin's Catholic Primary in Caversham. The governing bodies of St. Anne's and St. Martin's have just recently voted to federate.

## Main Findings

- The provision for Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education is good, because the outcomes in these areas are consistently good, with aspects which are outstanding.
- The school's leadership and management is good, because it has robust and increasingly reliable processes of self evaluation, clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses, and plans and acts very effectively, resulting in rapid improvements. The governors are knowledgeable, challenging and determined to oversee and support these improvements.
- The pupils are confident in articulating what it means to be in a Catholic school. They recognise the enriching, inclusive community in which they learn, and are internalising its values. This is amply evident in their outstanding behaviour and respectful care for one another, and their practical concern for others in need.

- The pupils' response to collective worship is very positive. They participate willingly and reverently, and are developing the skills of planning and presenting their own acts of worship with growing confidence.
- The quality of teaching in RE is good overall, with some outstanding practice observed. This results in good or better learning outcomes, and good progress over time

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The pupils benefit significantly from the Catholic life of the school, and readily participate in liturgies and assemblies, such as the dramatised presentations of the Christmas and Easter stories, or the Service of Commitment.
- The input of the pupils in developing the Catholic life of the school is growing stronger, especially their feedback through pupil voice questionnaires with comments and observations on how the Catholic ethos and religious education could be enriched.
- Their understanding of the school mission statement is translated into practice, for instance, showing a genuine group care with extraordinary gentleness for less able pupils. Older children in particular are exceptionally alert to the needs of those who need support and are quick to inform staff if there is a problem. They are excellent role models for others.
- The Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile values are being successfully promoted and the pupils themselves are able to nominate those who have exhibited some of the values. Virtue boxes are located on all class altars and certificates are awarded weekly in celebration assembly.
- The pupils organise their own charity fundraising events, demonstrating compassion for others in need, both locally and globally, such as CAFOD, the Hudson Society, Readifood, and the parish shrine of St. Anne project. The older children are becoming real animators in fostering among their peers a lively sense of vocation and service. The school has identified that there is still work to be done in giving more ownership and initiative to the pupils in developing the specifically Catholic character of the school.
- The quality of the provision for Catholic life is good. The whole environment of the school reflects its Catholic mission and ethos. It is an open and fully inclusive community where all children are invited to reflect on and live out the values embedded in the ethos of the school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is provided through the PSHCE programme 'Jigsaw', RE lessons, circle and sharing time, class worship, and anti-bullying week. These opportunities encourage pupils to help and serve, for instance, in carrying out class jobs or becoming playground buddies. Pupils also reflect on and discuss the 'big questions,' which they respond to in terms of faith and spirituality. As a result both pupils and staff are increasingly using religious language, and the language of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile virtues and values.
- Plans to improve the impact of RE across all subjects, in particular through the Cornerstones curriculum, have been carried through successfully. Multi faith and Black History weeks are celebrated; literacy has its Poetry with a Voice, focussing this term on Water Aid, and on the Stewardship of the Earth. Music from around the world is enjoyed and sung. In this way the whole school curriculum contributes

significantly to communicating the distinctive beliefs, values and the story of the Catholic community.

- The sacramental preparation programmes are jointly planned and run by the parish with the school. Pupils can speak with some confidence about the basic theology and the importance of the sacraments in their lives, and this is reflected in their written work.
- The pupils, even the youngest, respond with great attentiveness and reverence during prayer time and acts of worship, and this is due in no small way to the excellent role modelling provided by the older pupils and every staff member. During the inspection they behaved impeccably in the parish church where they were able to process through the Door of Mercy. The readers were well prepared and read with clarity and expression, and the well led and rehearsed hymn singing was uplifting for everyone.
- Many pupils are keen to become altar servers both at school and parish Masses.
- The pupils compose many beautiful prayers, which are displayed and used at the prayer tables, these prayers demonstrate their awareness of the different ways of praying and types of prayer. They are encouraged to monitor the quality of these focal prayer points, while the younger ones very quickly learn the symbolism of the religious artefacts on the tables.
- In conversation they were keen to take more ownership of their prayer life and the school is addressing this area, enabling them to develop the skills of planning and organising their own liturgy. New staff are being trained to model the process to pupils.
- The school provides a rich diet of liturgies, worship, and prayer both in and out of school. Collective worship in the classroom is an integral part of the day. The whole school assemblies, especially the praise assembly, reinforce the values and mission of the school very powerfully, using the good example of pupils themselves to inspire others.
- The children say traditional prayers at relevant times of the day and according to the liturgical seasons. They also compose their own prayers, both oral and written, and lead and participate in their daily class worship, although they are not always fully involved at the planning and organising stage.
- The Mass is celebrated in the adjacent parish church with whole school and different year groups. Special liturgies take place during Advent and Lent, as well as major feast days, in which the pupils participate with enthusiasm through drama, dance and music. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome presence in the school, and has elicited the pupils' support in reviving the Shrine of St. Anne in the Caversham parish.
- The curriculum is effective in promoting spiritual and moral personal development. There are many opportunities to develop their moral sense of responsibility towards others, especially in exercising their spirit of generosity through outreach to others less fortunate than themselves, and to live out their faith in practice and to meet Jesus in the other. This is clearly seen in the many fruitful fundraising events run by the pupils in aid of local and global charities, but also in anti-bullying awareness and the instinct to help and care for each other. They are aware of the work of St. Chad's Sanctuary for asylum seekers and refugees, and support the local food banks.
- The pupils are able to articulate what it means to answer a vocation. They explore the lives of others such as St. Francis, or a calling to religious life. They produced, for instance, insightful work in drawing up an advert to be an apostle, listing the qualities needed but also the commitment and difficult demands and choices that following a calling entails.
- The provision for the pupils' development of Catholic Christian values is good. The values listed in the Catholic School's Pupil Profile have been highlighted and they

are referred to on a daily basis, through assembly topics and built into lesson planning. As a result they have become part of the pupils' lives and awareness, and inspiring examples of their practice praised in assemblies.

## Leaders and Managers

### Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The promotion and nurturing of the Catholic life of the school is of paramount importance to senior leadership and governors; the transcripts of the head teacher's reports, the school improvement planning, and governors' minutes provide clear evidence of this, particularly over the last two years.
- The leadership of the head teacher has been both inspirational and transforming. She has successfully communicated her vision for the school's future, and through clear distributed leadership has been able to implement change very swiftly and effectively.
- The processes for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life, which have already enabled leadership and governors to plan further improvements, are being swiftly and effectively embedded. This includes regular termly audits of the impact of strategies to enhance ethos and spirituality. The feedback from pupils and parents is seen as a key element in the school's own self-evaluation, which is both honest and accurate as a result.
- The school's mission statement- 'At St. Anne's we live, love and learn as children of God'-, is visually prominent and is often addressed and interpreted in assemblies and in lessons. There could be further opportunities for pupils to reflect on, and discuss their own interpretations of what mission means for them, and their own ideas on how to promote it.
- There is a performance management objective for all leaders and teachers regarding Catholic life. Systems for monitoring and evaluating improvements are now being embedded and expectations are shared. The involvement of the governing body in the monitoring and evaluating of, and participation in, the Catholic life and collective worship of the school has increased significantly, visiting more frequently and carrying out fruitful learning walks. The role of foundation governors is also being reflected on and developed.
- The head teacher and RE subject leader ensure in-service training to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education. This is vital as the new teachers that have joined this now stable staff, need the support both for their own spirituality and to secure their RE subject knowledge.
- The structures to monitor and evaluate the impact of provision on RE outcomes are in place, through lesson observations and work scrutinies, as well as asking the pupils themselves what helps them to learn better. As a result provision and learning outcomes are continually being improved.
- Effective and close support is given to all teachers so that pupils continue to learn well. Guidance and support on planning and teaching techniques through in service training have provided valuable support, especially for the less experienced teachers, in drawing up lesson plans, learning objectives, and challenging, engaging activities. As a result pupils' interest and enjoyment in the learning process, and the learning outcomes, are steadily improving.
- Assessment and moderation of pupils' work provide a clear picture of progress over time, and this data is used to inform the planning of learning objectives, especially for the disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- The provision for collective worship and the implementation of improvements are closely monitored by leaders and managers, both for compliance and for impact.

- Parents are invited to assemblies, Masses and other liturgies. The number typically attending is on the increase. They are made welcome and their feedback is elicited verbally and through questionnaires.
- The audits for spirituality and Catholic life have been very fruitful, leading to a growth in the variety of opportunities for prayer and worship, including provision for the staff's own spirituality and prayer life.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- On entry to the school, pupils' prior knowledge and experience of the Faith and prayer life match diocesan expectation. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are working at, and some above, diocesan expectation. This represents consistently good progress year on year. Pupils in vulnerable groups, and SEND children, make similarly good progress through targeted support given by learning assistants.
- The end of Key Stage 2 data shows that pupils have continued to make good progress if slightly slower than the younger pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4. This is partly the legacy from their early years in the school during challenging times, and the frequent change of teachers. The new stability has enabled pupils to make up for much of the lost time, especially those taught by the more experienced teachers.
- Pupils are keen to learn with very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour for learning. They experience different learning styles, including paired discussion, independent work involving some research skills, role play and drama. They can explain how religious beliefs arise and show a greater understanding of how belief shapes lives and actions.
- Their written work often consists of short pieces of writing on a variety of topics, usually completed to a good standard. The number of pupils making more than expected progress would increase further if teachers set challenging learning objectives, and well differentiated tasks pitched more nearly to individual learning needs. More extended, reflective pieces of writing would enable teachers to assess individual progress more accurately from a greater body of work.
- Pupil feedback echoed the older pupils' frustration with the constant, rapid change of teachers in the past, compared with their present satisfaction in having a stable teacher who helps them to learn better.
- The teaching staff is a mix of experienced teachers and some newly qualified teachers. The quality of teaching overall is good, and where it is sometimes weaker, there is steady improvement through support and ongoing professional development.
- Teachers have sound subject knowledge, excellent rapport with their pupils, and plan their lessons well using a variety of strategies, which engage most pupils. This, together with the pupils' very positive behaviour for learning, results in good progress over time.
- The much improved procedures for recording and reviewing the quality of teaching, through lesson observations and book trawls, have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, thus enabling precise support and advice to be given exactly where it is needed. End of unit assessment is becoming more accurate and with the growing use of moderation with the partner school and others, judgements on achievement are becoming even more secure and reliable.
- Dialogue marking is at an early stage but already making a difference when the formative comments made by teachers are challenging, and the written response



by the pupils more thoughtful and extended. This is an area to be developed further.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all canonical and statutory requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The diocesan strategy is effectively used through topics which are extended and made relevant by well planned activities, such as role playing the sacraments or exploring the parish church and identifying objects and symbols. This gives the pupils first hand experiences and increases their knowledge and understanding.
- The RE coordinator maintains excellent detailed records on the delivery and impact of the subject. Notes and evaluations are updated almost daily, allowing objectives and targets to be re shaped when necessary, so that the pace of progress and improvement can be shared with the staff, and action taken where weaknesses have been identified. This exemplary practice is a significant driving force behind the school's rapid improvement.
- Pupils have the opportunity to explore other faiths in the topics on world religions. Those pupils and their parents, who belong to a different faith background, provide an excellent resource, which enable the other pupils to understand and respect other faiths and cultures. This is reinforced by the engaging activities and projects during Multi-Faith Week, parents from other faiths speak to the children, and there are hands on experiences such as learning Sikh dancing.
- The sex and relationship programme is in place and monitored to ensure it is consistent with the teachings of the Church and reflects Catholic teaching and values.

## Recommendations

### In order to improve the school should:

- Increase opportunities for all pupils to take more ownership in the planning and organising of their own liturgies and prayer life, and to increase their input and responsibility for the promotion of the Catholic life of the school.
- Raise standards in RE by improving the consistency and quality of teaching, particularly the impact of formative marking which drives progress over time, and the use of tasks matched to pupils' abilities which meet more effectively the learning needs of the individual pupil.